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SHORT STORIES

A WEEKLY MAGAZINE FOR HOME AND TRAIN

No. 605. FOR WEEK ENDING AUGUST 4TH, 1900. [ONE PENNY.

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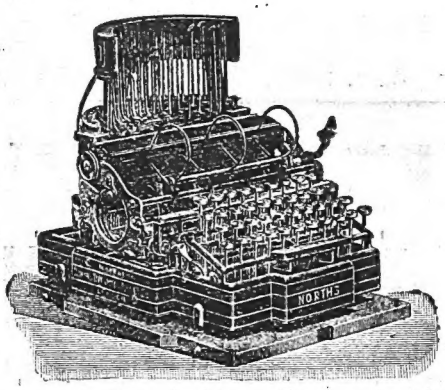

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15,409		**£6,641**	**10**

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These series of pens neither scratch nor spurt. They glide over the roughest paper with the ease of a soft lead pencil. An assorted sample box for 7 stamps from the works, Birmingham.

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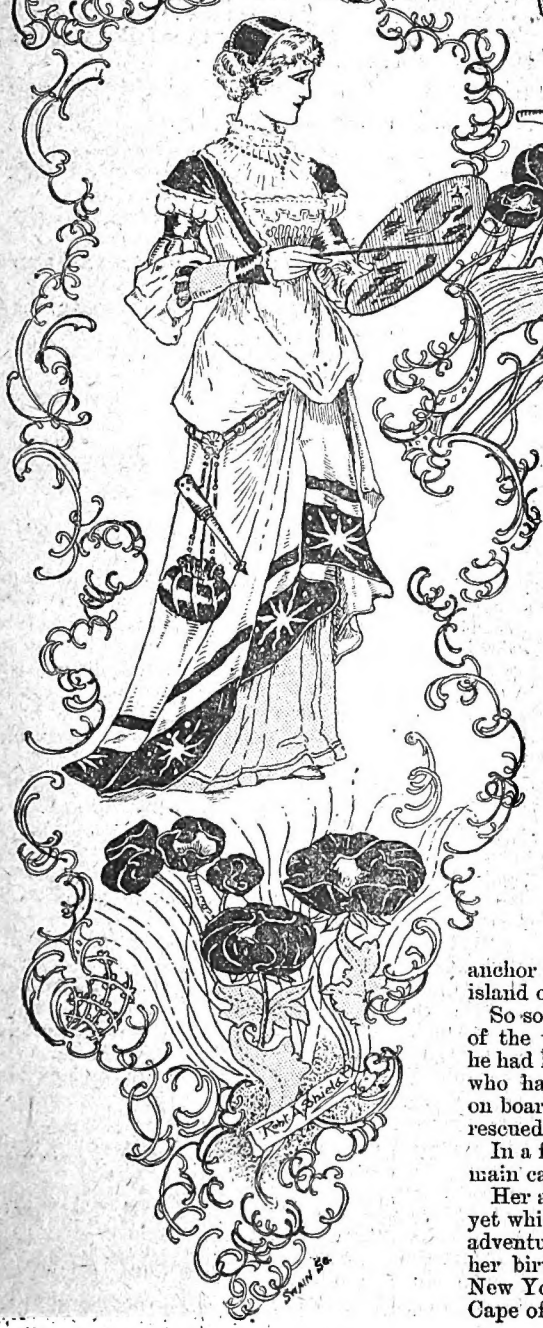
SHORT STORIES



No. 605. Price One Penny.

Week ending August 4th, 1900.

THE ADVENTURE OF ELIZABETH MOREY OF NEW YORK.

In the sea story of Australia, from the days of Captain Phillip in 1788, to the end of the "fifties," in the present century, American ships and seamen have no little part.

First they came into the harbour of Sydney Cove as traders carrying provisions for sale to the half-starved settlers, then as whalers, and before another thirty years had passed, the starry banner might be met with anywhere in the Pacific from the sterile shores of the Aleutian Islands to the coasts of New Zealand and Tasmania.

Early one morning in October, 1804, the American ship *Union* sailed in through Sydney Heads, and dropped anchor in the Cove. She was last from Tongatabu, the principal island of the Friendly Group.

So soon as she had been boarded by the naval officer in charge of the port, and her papers examined, the master stated that he had had a very exciting adventure with the Tongatabu natives, who had attempted to cut off the ship, and that there was then on board a young woman named Elizabeth Morey, whom he had rescued from captivity among the savages.

In a few minutes the young woman made her appearance in the main cabin, and was introduced to the officer.

Her age was about six-and-twenty, and her manners engaging; yet whilst she expressed her willingness to tell the story of her adventures among the islanders, she declined to say anything of her birth or parentage beyond the fact that she was a native of New York, and some years previously had made her way to the Cape of Good Hope.

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Her extraordinary narrative was borne out in all details as far as her rescue was concerned by the master of the *Union*, who she said had treated her with undeviating kindness and respect.

This is her story:—

"In February of the year 1802, when she was living at the Cape of Good Hope, she made the acquaintance of a Captain Melton, the master of the American ship *Portland*. His dashing appearance, his command of apparently unlimited money, and his protestations of affection for the unfortunate girl soon led her to respond to his advances, and ultimately to consent to accompany him on a voyage to the islands of the South Pacific.

"After a prosperous voyage the *Portland* arrived at what is now known as Nukualofa Harbour, on the Island of Tongatabu. Within a few hours after anchoring, Captain Melton received a note from a white man named Doyle, who was the only European living on the island, asking him to come on shore and visit the chief, who particularly wished to see him and secure his aid in repelling an invasion from the neighbouring group of islands known as Haabai.

"Had Melton known that this man Doyle was an escaped convict from Van Diemen's Land, he would at least have been careful; had he known that the man was in addition a treacherous and bloodthirsty villain, he would have hove-up anchor, and, sailing away, escaped his fate.

"But Doyle, in his note, enumerated the advantages that would accrue to him (Melton) by assisting the chief, and the seaman fell into the trap. 'You must try,' said the writer of the letter, 'to send at least one boat's crew well armed.'

"Melton was a man with an elastic conscience. Without troubling his head as to the right or wrong side of this quarrel among savages, he promptly complied with the request of the beachcomber, and called for volunteers; the whole of the ship's company responded.

"The chief mate, Gibson, picked four men; Anderson, the second officer, eight men, and these were at once dispatched on shore by the captain.

"The engagement came off on the following day, and the American allies of the chief (whom Miss Morey calls Ducara) inflicted fearful slaughter upon the enemy, and returned to the ship highly satisfied with themselves, and their native friends, who promised them every indulgence likely to gratify their tastes.

"In the evening Ducara himself came on board, and politely thanked the captain for his assistance.

"He slept all night in the cuddy, attended by Doyle, his minister of destruction, and took his leave early in the morning, promising to send ample refreshments on board in part return for favours received, and requesting that boats should be sent that evening to convey his gifts off to the ship.

"Within a few hours after he had returned to the shore, many hundreds of stalwart natives were seen carrying baskets of provisions down to the beach, and piling them in heaps in readiness for the boats.

"Melton, at this stage, seemed to have some sort of suspicion in his mind about sending the boats ashore after dark, for he gave the mate instructions not to dispatch them until he gave orders.

"The mate, however, who had been smitten by the beauty of a Tongan girl who had expressed her unqualified approval of his fighting capabilities in a very unconventional manner, had the utmost confidence in the good-will of the natives, and took it upon himself to disobey his captain's commands; consequently two boats were sent off just as daylight was breaking, and whilst the skipper lay asleep in his cabin.

"Within a couple of hours the smaller of the two boats returned, loaded with yams, 'gnatu' (tappa cloth), baked pigs, and fish.

"She was steered by the beachcomber, Doyle, and was rowed by two of the ship's boys, instead of the four men who had taken her ashore; these boys, it must be mentioned, had formed part of the crew of the larger boat, and had remained on the beach whilst the men had gone into the village at the invitation of Doyle and his fellow-conspirators.

"They, therefore, knew nothing of what had kept their shipmates from returning to the boats, when Doyle appeared, and said he wished to go off to the ship, and that the others would follow later on.

"Accompanying the boat was a flotilla of canoes, filled with hundreds of savages, who were allowed to come alongside, though the girl Morey was so terrified by their savage aspect that she begged her lover to instantly recall the rest of his men and heave up anchor.

"Melton, however, although he was now in a state of suspense owing to the non-appearance of his boat's crews, answered her calmly enough.

"'The two boys and Doyle say that the hands went up to the chief's house to see a native dance,' he said. 'I'll punish them for it when they return.'

"Meanwhile the boat was unloaded, and again sent on shore with the two boys, and Doyle's native friends clambered up on board from any accessible part of the ship.

The beachcomber thrust a dagger into the throat of the unfortunate man.

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"The beachcomber himself, a wild-looking, dark-skinned ruffian, who had clothed himself in a shirt and trousers, now came aft and again assured the captain that he need feel no alarm at the great number of naked savages who now thronged the deck, from the windlass right aft to the wheel. Perhaps, however, the villain had some feeling of humanity in his vile heart, for seeing the terrified face of the girl Morey, he suggested that she should go below until the natives had returned to the shore.

"But so impressed was she with a sense of imminent peril that she refused to leave the poop, and begged Melton earnestly, 'for goodness sake to take heed, and not thrust himself among the savages on the main deck.'

"The beachcomber gave her a glance—half rage, half pity—then with his left hand he suddenly dashed her aside, and with a ferocious yell sprang at Melton and thrust a dagger into the throat of the unfortunate man.

"In an instant his savage followers began their work of slaughter, and Mr. Gibson, the chief mate, the boatswain, and four seamen were soon lying dead upon the bloodstained decks, their heads battered out of all human semblance by the clubs of the islanders.

"Two lads, Miss Morey, and her negro servant-woman, were spared, but hurried down below.

"The bodies of the murdered men were at once thrown overboard to the sharks by Doyle's orders, and then he directed the natives to clear the decks.

"Elizabeth Morey, terrified out of her senses at the dreadful scenes she had witnessed, attempted to spring overboard, but Doyle caught her as she came on deck, urged her not to be frightened, and promised her in the name of the Virgin that no harm should come to her.

"So soon as the decks had been ridden of all traces of the ghastly work just completed, the half-unconscious girl was lifted over the side, placed in a canoe, taken on shore, and handed over to the care of a chief's wife.

"When she came to her senses she learnt from Doyle that all who were left alive of the ship's company were herself and servant, a Malay seaman, five boys, and an old sailor, who was a dwarf; the latter had evidently been spared, either on account of the natives ranking him as a boy, or from their aversion to inflict injuries upon anyone physically or mentally afflicted.

"The following three days were spent by the natives in unloading the ship, the work being carried on in the most systematic manner under the command of Doyle, the survivors of the crew being compelled to assist in the task.

"The cargo, which consisted mainly of bales of cotton, was got on shore in something less than a week; then the islanders began to dismantle the ill-fated ship.

"By the eighth day all the sails except the fore and main topsails were unbent and taken ashore.

"On the afternoon of this day but half-a-dozen natives were on board; they, with the five 'boys' (probably lads under eighteen years of age), and the dwarf sailor before mentioned, were 'spelling' for an hour or so before beginning to unbend the topsails, when, noticing that their captors were off their guard, the brave little man determined to retake the ship. In a few minutes he gained over his youthful shipmates to the attempt; they promised to stand by him to the last.

"Quietly arming themselves with axes, with iron belaying pins, with handspikes, with anything heavy and deadly they could lay their hands upon, they waited for the signal to begin the attack.

"Doyle, the blood-stained murderer, lay upon the skylight under the awning, half asleep and unsuspecting of danger; his native associates either slept or lounged about the main deck.

"A few hurried whispered words passed between the six whites; then the dwarf, carrying an axe negligently in his hand, ascended to the poop and laid it down on the deck. Then he turned, and his quick seaman's eye took in the surroundings.

"The trade wind was blowing freshly, the ship (she was a full-rigged ship, though under five hundred tons), was straining at her hempen cable, and the low, palm-clad shore was nearly two miles away.

"He picked up the axe and ran towards Doyle, who tried to spring to his feet as the weapon buried itself to the head in his bosom! In less than five minutes the dreadful work was done, and Doyle and the six Tongans were weltering in their gore upon the very deck which was still stained by the traces of their own crimes. Before the natives on shore could realise what had happened the cable was cut, the topsails loosened and sheeted home, and the *Portland* standing out to sea through the dangerous network of reefs which surrounded the harbour. Her recapture was a ghastly work, but the law of self-preservation is inexorable under such circumstances.

"Elizabeth Morey, aroused from a troubled slumber by the cries of her captors, came to the doorway of the chief's house, and stood watching the ship, which, though only under her fore and main topsails, was fast slipping through the water.

He picked up the axe and ran towards Doyle.

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"In two hours the *Portland* was safe, and the broken-hearted girl sank upon her knees and wept. She was now utterly alone, for her negro servant-woman had gone on board the ship with Doyle to get some of her clothing, and had been carried off.

"The only remaining member of the *Portland's* crew was a Malay—a man of whom she had an instinctive dread, for since the massacre of the ship's company he had one day asked her with a mocking grin if she could not 'clean his coat.' It was Melton's white duck jacket, and the ensanguined garment brought all the horror of his death before her again.

"Then followed fifteen long, long months of horror, misery, and agony. She was a woman, and her terrible fate evokes the warmest pity. Whatever may have been her past before she met Melton and accompanied him on his fateful voyage, her sufferings during those fifteen dreadful months may be imagined, but not written of or suggested, except by the neurotic new-woman writer, who loves to dwell upon things degrading, terrifying, and abhorrent to the healthy mind."

* * * * *

In August, 1804, the American whaler *Union*, of Nantucket, after having refreshed at Sydney Cove, as Port Jackson was then called, sailed on a sperm-whaling cruise among the South Sea Islands. She arrived at Tongatabu on the last day of September.

So soon as the anchor was let go a fleet of canoes appeared, and the occupants made the most friendly demonstrations towards Captain Pendleton and his officers. In the leading canoe was a man whom the captain took to be a Malay, and upon being questioned this surmise proved to be correct. In broken English he informed Pendleton that the ship would be provided with plenty of fresh food, water and wood, if the ship's boats were sent ashore.

He called the hands aft and explained the situation.

The captain's boat was thereupon swung out and lowered, and manned by six men, the captain and Mr. John Boston, the supercargo, going with them. These people were armed with six muskets and two cutlasses.

So soon as the boat was well clear of the ship the natives became very troublesome, clambering up the chain plates, and forcing themselves on board in great numbers.

The chief mate, Daniel Wright, seems to have shown more sense than most of the poor fools who, by their own negligence, brought about—and still bring about—these tragedies.

He got his men together and tried to drive off the intruders, but despite his endeavours thirty or forty of them kept to the deck, and their countrymen in the canoes alongside rapidly passed them up a number of war-clubs.

Wright, with the greatest tact, and with apparently good-humoured force, at last succeeded in clearing the decks and bustling all the natives except the chief, over the side into their canoes.

He was a big, brawny, New Englander, had served in the American Navy before he had taken to whaling, and knew the value of coolness and discipline in an emergency though he felt much inclined to pistol the chief, who all this time had been pretending to support his authority, though actually telling his people to be "more patient, as the time had not yet come."

This chief, whose name is not given in the *Sydney Gazette* of 1804, but who may have been the same "Ducara" of the *Portland* massacre, or one of Ducara's *matabulis*, at last took his leave with the usual protestations of regard so natural to even the present Christianised Tongan native of this year of grace, when he means mischief.

Descending into his canoe, he led the whole flotilla to the beach. Then the mate hoisted the ensign, and fired a gun as a warning to those of the ship's company on shore to return.

No notice was taken of the signal, and presently through his glass Mr. Wright saw that the captain's boat was lying broadside on to the beach, surrounded by a crowd of islanders, and without a boat-keeper. This was sufficiently alarming.

It was now late in the afternoon, and Captain Pendleton had been absent five hours. He at once came to the conclusion that the people who had gone ashore in the boat were either prisoners or had been murdered.

To send another boat after them, he felt sure, would only lead to the destruction of the whole ship's company in detail, and the ultimate loss of the ship without there being the least chance of effecting any good.

So he called the hands aft, explained the situation, and began to prepare to resist capture.

All the available firearms were loaded, heavy stones which formed the ship's ballast were placed along the waterways fore and aft in readiness to smash the canoes which he anticipated would come alongside, the drying-out works fires were lighted, and the huge dry-pots filled with water, which when boiling would add to their means of defence, by pouring it down in bucketsful upon the savages; the cable was prepared for slipping, sails loosened, and every other precaution which suggested itself to him made.

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The sun dropped into the western sea-rim, and there was still no sign of the captain's boat.

On the shore an ominous silence prevailed, though now and then it would be broken by the weird, resonant boom of a conch-shell.

The night was passed in the greatest anxiety by all on board, every man, musket in hand, keeping a keen look-out.

Almost as the dawn broke, two canoes were seen to put off from Nukualofa beach, and come towards the ship.

They were manned by young Tongan "bucks" who, in reply to the mate's questions as to the whereabouts of the captain and his crew, answered him with gestures which the ship's company rightly enough construed as meaning that their comrades had all been killed, and that their turn would come shortly.

This so enraged the seamen that they tried to induce Mr. Wright to open fire on the canoes, destroy them, and get the ship away before worse happened.

But the mate, still hoping that his people on shore were still alive, and that he could yet rescue them, refused to comply, and the whole of that day and night passed without anything further happening.

On the following morning several canoes came within hail and then lay-to.

In one of them was the Malay, who asked the mate to come ashore as his captain and the supercargo wished to see him.

The mate temporised and requested the Malay to come on board and explain matters, but he refused and returned to the shore.

In a few hours he reappeared at the head of a fleet of canoes, and then, to Mr. Wright's intense astonishment, he saw that the Malay was accompanied by a young white woman, who was sitting on the for'ard outrigger of the canoe, in which the Malay was steersman.

The flotilla brought to within pistol-shot of the ship, and the woman stood up and called to him in English.

"Come on shore and see the captain. He wants to speak to you."

The mate made no answer, but beckoned to the fleet of canoes to come nearer. And then, mercifully, as he took another look at the white woman, he saw her, when the surrounding savages were not watching her, shake her head vehemently to him not to comply.

The flotilla came still nearer, and again Elizabeth Morey was made to repeat the mechanical request for him to come on shore and see the captain.

Wright, surmising that she was acting under coercion, appeared to give little heed to her request, but told the Malay, who seemed to direct the natives, that he would wait for the captain.

Then the fleet of canoes turned, and headed for the shore, and the captive woman gave the mate a despairing, agonised look that not only filled him with the deepest commiseration for her, but almost convinced him that poor Pendleton and the others were dead.

Another night of weary anxiety passed, and again with the dawn a single canoe came off, manned by half a dozen armed natives steered by the Malay and carrying Miss Morey. This canoe was followed by many others, but the leading one alone came close enough to the whale-ship to communicate.

Little by little her savage crew drew nearer, watching every movement of those on board with the utmost suspicion; the mate, who was standing at the break of the poop on the starboard side, desired them to come closer,

Wright, jumping overboard, helped the poor creature up over the side.

holding in his hand a loaf of bread, which he said he wanted to give to the white woman. The loaf was inclosed in a piece of white paper, on which he had written these words.

"I fear that all on shore are murdered. I will wait here a few days in the hope that you may be able to escape to us."

For some minutes the savages watched the white man, who, apparently disgusted with his attempts to induce them to come closer and take the loaf of bread, placed it on the rail and lit his pipe.

The Malay again urged him to come ashore and "see the captain," but Wright made an impatient gesture and told him he must come closer if he wanted to talk.

The scoundrel did bring the canoe a few fathoms nearer, and then stopped her way.

Then the girl, unable to restrain herself any longer, stood up and cried out:

"All your friends on shore have been killed," then she leapt into the water and swam towards the ship.

A yell of rage burst from the natives in the canoes, but it was answered by the fire of musketry from the ship and the thunder of two carronades, which, loaded with iron nuts and bolts, had been in readiness, one on the poop, the other on the topgallant forecastle—and the girl succeeded in reaching the ship's side in time to take hold of a life-buoy secured to a line which was thrown to her, and Wright, jumping overboard, helped the poor creature up over the side into safety.

Then began a desperate and furious assault to capture the ship. The savages, led by the renegade Malay, made three successive attempts to board, but were each time beaten back by Wright and his gallant seamen,

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and the crystal water around the *Union* was soon reddened to a deep hue. Meanwhile the cable had been slipped, and, like the *Portland*, the *Union's* company were saved from death by the freshness of the trade-wind alone.

In half an hour after the last attack had been repelled, the ship was out of danger from pursuit.

So soon as the vessel had cleared the passage Wright hove her to, and went down below to Miss Morey, who, exhausted and almost hysterical as she was, yet answered his questions readily.

"You must forgive me, madam, but it is my duty to at once ask you an important question. Are you sure that Captain Pendleton and the supercargo are dead? I cannot take the ship away if there is any uncertainty about their fate."

"I beseech you, sir, to have no doubts. I saw the two gentleman beaten to death by clubs before my eyes. They were sitting down to eat when they were murdered. One was killed by the Malay man, the other by an old *matabuli*. Oh, for Heaven's sake, sir, do not delay! The natives have been planning to capture the ship and murder her people for the past three days."

Then, as she became more collected, she satisfied him that all of Captain's Pendleton's party had been cruelly and treacherously murdered, and also told him her own terrible story previous to the arrival of the *Union*.

The destruction of poor Pendleton and Mr. Boston had been planned, she said, by the Malay; and when he and his native friends found that they could not induce Mr. Wright to further weaken his ship's company by sending another boat's crew on shore, so that the *Union* might the more easily be captured, she was ordered under the most awful threats to act as decoy.

Resolved to upset their diabolical plan, or die in the attempt, she gave an apparently cheerful assent to the meditated scheme of murder, and hence her appearance in the canoe with the treacherous Malay.

Under the kindly care of Mr. (now Captain) Wright, the young woman soon regained her health and strength in a great measure, and her delight knew no bounds when he announced to her his intention of returning to Sydney Cove to refit before proceeding home to America.

The *Union*, as we have before stated, entered Sydney harbour in October, 1804, and before that time the simple gratitude of the rescued girl to her rescuer had changed into a deeper and tenderer feeling. But we must not anticipate.

Soon as Captain Wright had made his report to the New South Wales authorities, Miss Morey went on shore, where she was treated most hospitably by the wives of some of the military officers, whilst Wright was refitting his ship.

A few days afterwards there arrived in Sydney Harbour an East India ship, the captain of which gave Wright some interesting particulars concerning the *Portland* and Captain Melton.

The latter had a peculiar history. At the end of the year 1800 he appeared in Manila, where he was intrusted with the command of a brig belonging to Mr. John Stewart Kerr, the American Consul of that city. His orders were to proceed to Batavia, and there dispose of his cargo, bringing in return saleable goods for the Manila market. He was given also a letter of credit for 20,000 dollars, the better to load the vessel.

On arrival at Batavia he sold the cargo and the brig into the bargain, and purchased in her place the *Portland*, a ship of about 400 tons.

From Batavia he wrote to Kerr—he seemed to have been the Captain "Bully" Hayes of his time—informed him of what he had done and mentioned that as he intended to make a long pleasure cruise among the islands of the South Pacific, he did not expect to return to Manila for some considerable time!

He also, it is needless to say, duly cashed his letter of credit for 20,000 dollars, which six months afterwards was duly presented and taken up by Mr. Kerr.

The *Portland* was then chartered by a firm of Dutch merchants at Batavia to proceed to Serra Bay to load rice and return to Batavia. Melton sailed to Serra Bay, loaded his cargo of rice, and instead of returning to Batavia, went to the Isle of France and there cheerfully sold it.

The next account of him received at Manila was that he was having a "reul good time," at the Cape of Good Hope, where his fascinating manners and command of money (Kerr's money) made him many friends.

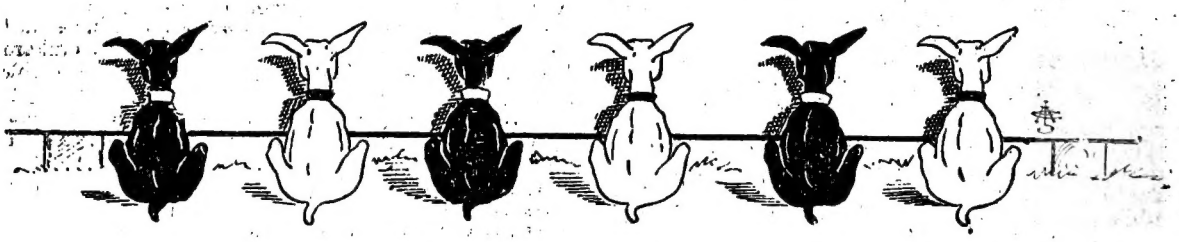
Suddenly, however, he and the *Portland* disappeared, and Elizabeth Morey, as we have mentioned, accompanied him.

He had given out that he was bound for the North-west coast of America, to enter into the fur trade, but, beyond that rumour, nothing more was heard of him until the *Union* arrived at Port Jackson, and Elizabeth Morey told the tale of his dreadful end.

* * * * *

No further mention of the names of Captain Wright, Elizabeth Morey, or the good ship *Union* appear in the early colonial records after 1804; but that the girl's rescue by the gallant mate of the whaleship led to her ultimate happiness we can safely assume, for in the year 1836 they were married in Honolulu, Sandwich Islands, one "Marie Kaulani Shepherd, daughter of John Shepherd, to Daniel Morey Wright, master of the ship *Patience* and son of Daniel and Elizabeth Wright, of Sa'em, U.S.A."

LOUIS BECKE.



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My Last Rehearsal.

PROBABLY the theory of Evolution never received a more practical illustration, physically and mentally, than in my case. For whereas I am now a portly, sedate, well-to-do father of a family, churchwarden, overseer and guardian of my parish, some thirty years ago I was a slender, harum-scarum bachelor, impecunious, and ready at a moment's notice for any folly which might present itself to my excitable and mercurial temperament. Vicious I certainly was not, but merely thoughtless and inconsiderate.

My name is Mathews, and I was christened Charles, after my uncle, from whom my father had pecuniary expectations.

The late Charles Reade was undeniably right when he said that versatility never pays. I was a fair baritone singer, a clever caricaturist, and admirable mimic, and enjoyed great renown as an amateur actor. Yet at the age of twenty-five I was entirely dependent on my father for the necessaries of life and pocket money.

My largest creditor at this time was my tailor, to whom I was indebted for the sum of ninety-five pounds, four shillings and sixpence.

Unless my father "stumped up," I had as much chance of being able to pay the National Debt as defraying this amount.

For some reason or other my father proved unusually obstinate at this juncture, and declined to do anything in the matter; I remember he described his conduct as firmness.

I have omitted to mention that I was in love with a very pretty but portionless young lady of the name of Walker. My father characterised this circumstance as another sample of my thoughtlessness and perversity, as among my acquaintance were several young ladies with very tolerable fortunes.

I had a quasi-rival for Miss Walker's good graces of the name of Nobbs. He was so very plain and unpleasant in his manners that I entertained no fear of being ousted by him, and accordingly we were very good friends.

He employed the same tailor (Binks) as myself, and one memorable morning Mr. Nobbs came to me and told me that Binks had issued a writ against me for the amount of my debt.

The law against debtors at that date was much more stringent than it is at present, and I determined to leave London and go into hiding for a time, until I could prevail on my wealthy uncle to relieve me of Binks' claim.

I had a few pounds in my pocket, and informed Nobbs that I would start at once for a small watering-place which I will here call Seamouth. I had never been there, but had heard a good account of it from a friend who had found it cheap, quiet, and salubrious. In an hour I had my modest portmanteau packed (which had my name duly inscribed on a brass plate thereon), and was steaming at the rate of thirty miles an hour for the nearest town to Seamouth.

When I left the train, I found there was a coach about to start for Seamouth, a distance of eight miles. After an hour's drive I was deposited at the door of the "Red Lion." I was not much puzzled as to the choice of my hotel, for the "Red Lion" was the only inn in the place.

Seamouth consisted apparently of one long straggling street, with a few detached houses on the outskirts. At a distance of a hundred yards the open sea tumbled and tossed on a shingly beach.

In ten minutes I felt I had "done" Seamouth, and contemplated with some feelings of dismay a lengthened residence in this secluded spot. I had already secured a bedroom, left my portmanteau, and ordered a steak and accessories prior to my stroll round the place.

As I crossed the entrance hall to the coffee-room, I found myself the object of special observation by the staff of the hotel. The rubicund Boniface saluted me with a broad grin, the antiquated waiter smirked in a peculiar fashion as he hastened to open the door of the coffee-room, while a house-maid on the stairs was evidently much more occupied in studying my personal appearance than sweeping the carpeted stairs. A half-length of what was evidently the cook peered from the regions below.

I was about to seat myself at one of the tables when the host advanced, and with a very deferential bow, begged that I would accept the offer of a private room. Anticipating my objection, he went on to say that no extra expense would be incurred in consequence.

So a few minutes saw me engaged in discussing a juicy tender steak, some mealy potatoes, flanked by a tankard of nut-brown ale, with an obsequious waiter as my sole attendant. I determined to write to my uncle immediately after dinner, as my slender purse would soon be exhausted in defraying the cost of my present luxury.

As the waiter placed an apple-tart on the table, he remarked:

"I think this is your first visit to Seamouth, sir?"

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I replied in the affirmative, muttering *sotto voce*, "and also my last; Seamouth appears to be a very sleepy kind of place."

The old waiter drew himself up, apparently resenting this stigma on the little watering-place:

"Very quiet, sir, but very select. But we shall be very lively now *you* have honoured us with a visit, sir."

I failed to perceive how the presence of a fugitive debtor could add to the cheerfulness of any place, but I made no reply, considering the compliment would be charged for in the bill.

"It's hastonishing, sir, what a difference the theatre makes when it is hopen."

"But Seamouth cannot support a theatre," I replied.

"No, sir, honly when a star comes; I remember, when I was a boy, seeing Mr. Macready hact here; and people came from far and near to see 'im. Our yard was full of traps of hevery description; and so it will be hon Thursday next, when Mr. Charles Mathews makes his appearance."

As he said these words the old waiter made a profound genuflection, and left the room. A light dawned upon me; my name was identical with that of the great comedian. The waiter had read the name on the brass plate on my trunk, and I had been mistaken for the coming man.

I was chuckling over the singular error, and had resolved to disabuse the staff of the "Red Lion" accordingly, whose curious reception of me was now explained, when a circumstance occurred which caused me to change my resolution. The window of the room which I occupied commanded a view of the coach road leading to the nearest town.

As I reflected over the curious blunder, I found myself mechanically watching a dog-cart which was rapidly approaching the inn. It drew up at the door, and from the vehicle descended a stout, coarse-looking man, wearing a very bad hat, and very seedy in his habiliments in general.

I was reading the advertisement in the *Seamouth Express* which announced the appearance of the London actor, in his celebrated character of Sir Charles Coldstream in *Used Up* on Thursday next.

This was one of my best impersonations as an amateur, and I had made such close study of the original representative that I could reproduce every tone, and glance, and gesture. My personal appearance was also very similar.

At this moment the waiter entered the room, holding his hand before his face, and apparently convulsed with laughter.

"I beg pardon, sir, but you will laugh as much as me when I tell you, sir. There is a sheriff's officer in the coffee-room, who wants to serve a writ on a Mr. Charles Mathews; he inquired if a gent of that name was here. I told him, yes—the noted hactor. He guv a sigh, and said that was not the gent he wanted. He is going to stop here, as he knows for certain that his man is coming to Seamouth directly, and he will watch the arrivals by coach."

As the waiter delivered this exordium my mind was at work endeavouring to solve the mystery of my hiding-place being discovered. Nobbs—that was the solution. On second thoughts he had disclosed the place of my retreat to Binks.

As the waiter concluded, my determination was taken. My natural love of fun and adventure, combined with the instinct of self-preservation, decided me to accept the honours thus suddenly thrust upon me. I made no reference to the waiter's story, treating it as too absurd for discussion.

"I want to send a note round to the lessee of the Theatre Royal."

"Certainly, sir. The boots can take it."

In a few seconds I had scribbled the following:

"Dear Simpson—to quote the Duke's Motto—I am here. Will you call a rehearsal of *Used Up* for to-morrow at eleven? Yours faithfully, C. J. Mathews."

This characteristic note was promptly dispatched, and I waited the result in serenity and with a keen sense of approaching enjoyment.

In half-an-hour the answer came.

"Dear Mr. Mathews, I am agreeably surprised by your early arrival, as I did not expect you till the morning of Thursday (the day of the performance). I suppose the papers are in error in advertising you as playing at Plymouth to-day, Tuesday? I shall be very pleased to make your acquaintance. Yours sincerely, T. Simpson."

Nothing could be more fortunate. Mr. Simpson had never seen the great comedian; and I was safe till Thursday. The reader may inquire, Why did I not make my escape from Seamouth while I had the opportunity? I can only reply, that my love of adventure was responsible for my conduct. I should inflict no harm on any one; indeed, I was conferring an actual benefit on the company of the Theatre Royal by affording them the great advantage of an extra rehearsal. And the actor himself would find his task on Thursday considerably smoother, as all my "business" was precisely the same as he would adopt.

Punctual to the hour appointed, I made my appearance at the stage-door on the following morning.

"Good-morning, Mr. Mathews," exclaimed a little, shabbily-dressed man, who was standing with his back to the fire-place, in conversation with the Cerberus who guarded the sacred portal of the drama.

"Good-morning, Mr. Simpson. Where is the company?"

"They are all on the stage, Mr. Matthews. I have got a pretty Mary for you, and a capital blacksmith."

I followed Mr. Simpson along a dimly-lighted passage to the stage. As we threaded the gloomy labyrinth, my conductor whispered to me:

"You were satisfied with the terms I offered?"

"Perfectly," I answered. "Nothing could have been more liberal." (How I wondered what they were!)

"Yes, I think that arrangement is the fairest for both parties," continued the worthy manager.

I found a group of seedy-looking individuals on the stage, who were severally introduced to me. The personator of Mary Wurzel was a pretty looking girl, but very pale and emaciated, while the representative of the blacksmith was a diminutive but sturdy little man.

"Hallo! this won't do; Ironbrace should be a big man or where is the alarming contrast between Sir Charles in the deadly affray which takes place."

The manager shrugged his shoulders.

"We can't get another now."

While they arranged the first scene I glanced round the theatre. It was a band-box of a house, and I should not have hesitated to play the piece in my own proper person had necessity compelled it. But when Thursday came I must be miles away.

Here I suddenly remembered that the individual I was personating was renowned for his vivacity and stores of anecdote. So I drew on my memory, an uncommonly retentive one, and poured forth a stream of witticisms,

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which seemed to meet the circumstances of the case, for the company laughed immoderately, until at last the manager suggested a commencement of the rehearsal.

"We have all heard of your wonderful conversational powers, Mr. Mathews, and report has not exaggerated them, but suppose we——"

"Exactly, Mr. Simpson; business first and pleasure afterwards."

I at once addressed myself to the business of the scenes, and really worked very hard in putting the company through their facings.

It would not interest the general reader to mention in detail the very natural shortcomings of a scratch country company of strolling players. But I found them very docile and extremely anxious to follow my directions implicitly. Small as were my available resources, I expended half-a-sovereign in refreshment, and their countenances expressed their gratitude even more than their words.

There was another piece down for rehearsal, *Married for Money*, but I was totally unacquainted with the piece so I suggested it should be postponed till the morrow.

Towards the conclusion of the rehearsal I observed Mr. Simpson examining my features with great earnestness.

"You wear uncommonly well, Mr. Mathews; I was told you were about forty, but you don't look more than five-and-twenty."

"All habit, my dear sir, I never encourage the idea of age. I follow the advice of Bulwer Lytton. Decide upon the age at which you choose to remain, and refuse to become any older—I have selected five-and-twenty. Perennial Jove, you know, and all that sort of thing."

My auditor was convinced; I continued:

"Besides youth is my stock in trade. How could I play the youthful Jemmy Jessamys if I looked my real age?"

My logic was unanswerable.

Ere we parted Mr. Simpson shook my hand heartily.

"A cheque on Friday morning, as soon as we have verified the receipts; I suppose that will do, Mr. Mathews?"

"Perfectly," I replied, cordially returning the pressure.

I was walking leisurely towards my hotel, when I beheld a sight which almost turned my blood to water.

Striding along in his usual brisk and jaunty fashion was the great comedian himself. He was evidently going to the theatre. Fortunately the building was closed, as I had seen Mr. Simpson lock the door and walk away with the key in his pocket. But Seamouth was a small place, and the manager could soon be found. My course was plain. I must fly, and at once.

I met the waiter in the doorway. He grinned and pointed to a couple of trunks in the hall, on which was inscribed, "Mr. Charles Mathews."

"He's come, sir."

"Where is the sheriff's officer?" I inquired in as calm a tone as I could assume.

"He's gone for a walk on the beach. I have sent boots after him. The gent has not come by the coach. He came in a fly. Pretty extravagance in a man as can't pay his owings. But it's just like that class."

"Please make out my bill, waiter," said I, calmly, though I felt my heart thumping against my chest, as vulgar people say, nineteen to the dozen.

The waiter's countenance fell.

"Ain't you comfortable, sir?"

"Quite; your hotel is a perfect Elysium; but Mr. Simpson wishes me to stay with him till I leave Seamouth."

In five minutes I had paid my bill, and given the waiter a handsome *douceur*, and shouldering my portmanteau, was on my way to the theatre. The waiter expressed his regret that the boots was on the beach looking for the sheriff's officer, and so unable to carry my portmanteau, and he himself was unable to leave the hotel, "all the spoons being about, you see, sir."

Nothing could well be more fortunate for my purpose. As I strode away the horses were being harnessed to the departing coach, and as soon as possible I made my way to the road along which the coach must pass on its way to the town.

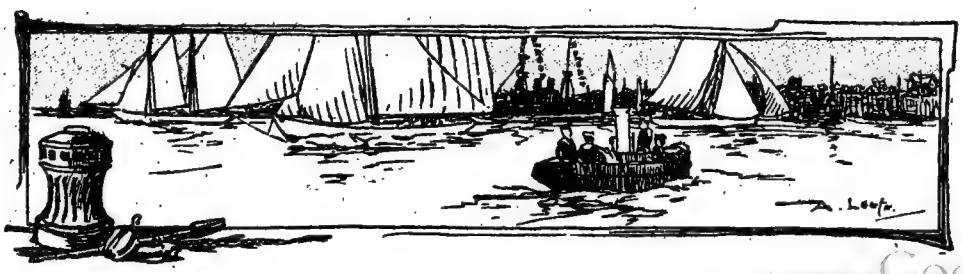
I did not feel safe till I had mounted the box-seat and had left Seamouth some miles behind. The coach was timed to meet the London train, and ere night fell I was once more under the parental roof.

Here I found a letter from my uncle, inclosing a cheque for a hundred pounds, and a nomination to a valuable Government appointment.

From that moment I turned over a new leaf, married Miss Walker, and forgave Nobbs (who protested his innocence as to my address). But as I considered conquerors can afford to be generous, I wrote a letter to the great comedian, explaining my conduct under very trying circumstances, and received a cordial letter of thanks in response for the very efficient rehearsal I had given the company of the Theatre Royal. The inconvenience to him from the sheriff's officer was but of brief duration, my flight having sufficiently shown which was the real Simon Pure.

I have never paid a visit to Seamouth again.

HENRY TURNER.



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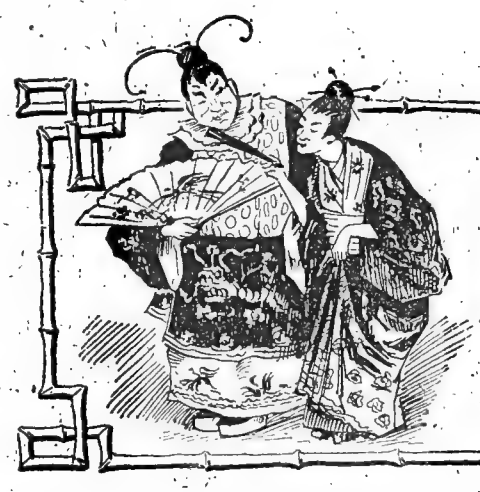

Mr. Bowser's Tribulations.

XVII.—HE BELIEVES IN TRANSMIGRATION AND SETS OUT TO PROVE IT.

THE Bowsers had enjoyed a quiet hour after dinner the other evening, when a dog was heard howling in front of the house, and Mrs. Bowser suggested that the animal be driven away.

"By George, but that's a curious coincidence!" exclaimed Mr. Bowser, as he got up. "It was only this afternoon that I was reading a long article on transmigration, and here a dog comes howling in front of my door."

"I don't see any curious coincidence about it," replied Mrs. Bowser. "If you had been reading a long article about Noah and his ark the dog would have come just the same. Please go out and drive him away."

"I'll do nothing of the sort. How can we tell that the soul of one of our dead friends has not passed into that dog and returned to earth again?"

"Nonsense."

"You may sneer and sneer, but there are thousands who believe in transmigration. I'm almost a believer myself. Hear that howl? There is something about it that reminds me of the voice of someone I have known. I won't do any driving away until I've had a look at the animal."

Mr. Bowser put on his hat and went out. The dog sat at the gate and was getting ready for another howl, but choked it off into a whine as the door opened. As no sticks were thrown or hard words used, he made bold to jump the fence and enter the yard. He was a long, lank, ill-used, bob-tailed dog, who had evidently broken loose from home and was prospecting round the country.

Mr. Bowser was about to utter a yell and scare the canine out of a year's growth when Mrs. Bowser spoilt it all by opening the door and demanding:

"Well, why don't you drive him away, or has he turned out to be an old friend of yours?"

Mr. Bowser snapped his fingers, and as the dog came trotting up the steps he was ushered into the hall and through to the sitting-room. The family cat was lying under a chair and seemed asleep, but it didn't take her over the thousandth part of a second to wake up and light on that intruder.

There was a mix up for a few seconds, during which Mrs. Bowser ran upstairs. Mr. Bowser got on a chair, and cat and dog rolled over each other on the floor. Then the cat flew upstairs after Mrs. Bowser, and the dog sat down and looked at Mr. Bowser and waited for further instructions.

"What on earth did you do that for!" called Mrs. Bowser from the head of the stairs.

"Because I want to make use of this dog," answered Mr. Bowser. "I'm going to give him something to eat and then study him."

It happened to be the cook's night out or there would have been a riot in the kitchen. As it was, Mr. Bowser cleared the pantry for the dog, and when there was nothing more to eat he returned to the sitting-room. Mrs. Bowser came down just then to say:

"I never heard of such a silly thing in all my life. Why don't you turn him out?"

"Let me tell you something," replied Mr. Bowser. "There's a familiar look about that dog's face. There's an expression about the mouth which awakens a memory.

Mr. Bowser got up on a chair, and the cat and dog rolled over each other on the floor.

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I say, now, but just as true as you live one of the best friends I ever knew had just such an expression. Upon my word, I believe the soul of Will Baker, who died two years ago, has passed into this dog!"

"Then it had better pass out again. I'll open the door and you can drive him off."

"I'll do nothing of the kind. That expression almost clinches my belief in transmigration. Suppose it should be the soul of my dear friend come back to earth again? See him look at me. Why, woman, that dog seems to understand every word I say!"

"Well, you can talk over old times with him and I'll go up-stairs," replied Mrs. Bowser. "If he suddenly goes mad and bites you don't blame anyone but yourself."

"It's queer—mighty queer," mused Mr. Bowser after a long study of the dog's face. "That is Will Baker's mouth exactly. If he has come back to earth in the form of a dog I'll not cast him adrift. A dog can't talk, but if this is poor Will there ought to be some way of making sure of it. Doggie——"

The dog didn't wait for him to finish. He lifted his head and indulged in a long drawn howl which made things rattle.

"For heaven's sake, but what is going on down there?" shouted Mrs. Bowser.

"The dog howled. I was going to ask him if the soul of Will Baker had returned to earth in this form, when he—"

There was another howl. It was louder and longer than the other, and there was something so uncanny about it that Mr. Bowser found chills racing up and down his back.

He determined to turn the soul of Will Baker into the street forthwith, but he instantly discovered an obstruction in his path. The soul objected. That is, the dog stood firmly planted on his feet before him and not only howled again, but finished up with a menacing growl and a vigorous scratching of the carpet with all four feet.

"What is it now?" shouted Mrs. Bowser.

"The beastly cur won't let me move him. I believe he's going mad! You'd better open the front window and yell for the police."

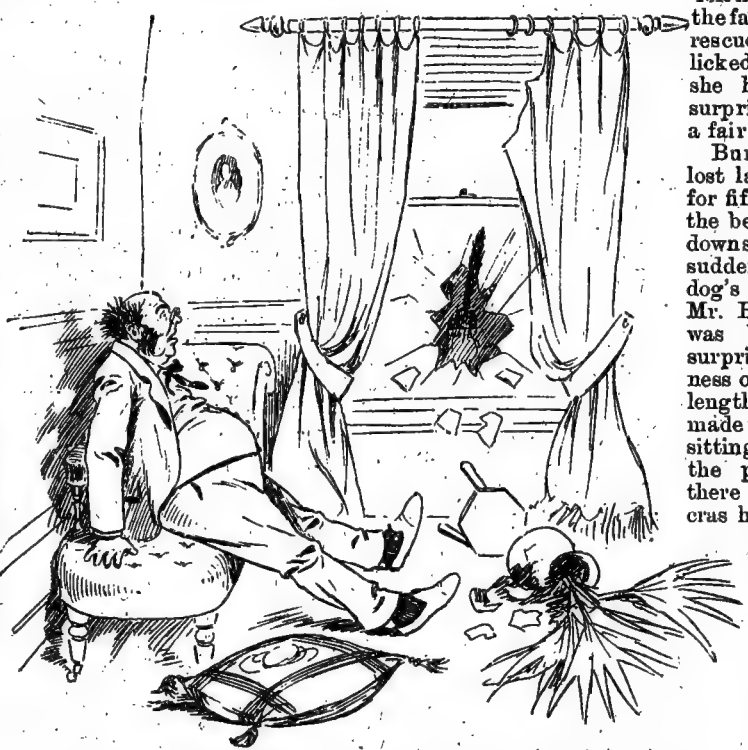
"We don't want to rouse the whole neighbourhood and have them laughing at you. If that's the soul of your dearest friend he'll go out if you ask him to. Is the expression of the mouth the same as it was?"

"It's a heap worse. Can't you slip down and open the front door?"

Mrs. Bowser said she'd try it, but she didn't. The dog decided to take a view of the second storey and made a start.

She heard him coming and had just time to reach her bedroom and shut the door when he banged against it. He tore round for a minute or two and then got down-stairs and drove Mr. Bowser on to the sofa, and stood in front of him and growled and chuckled and gurgled in a way to freeze the blood.

It was evident that the soul of Will Baker wasn't a gentle, peaceful soul. Mr. Bowser had shut his eyes and felt his helplessness when the family cat came to the rescue. She had been licked in the fight, but she had been taken by surprise and hadn't had a fair chance.



With the cat clinging to his back the dog had taken a header through the window.

Burning to recover her lost laurels, after hiding for fifteen minutes under the bed she had sneaked downstairs, and all of a sudden she landed on the dog's back. The soul of Mr. Bowser's old chum was both pained and surprised at the sharpness of her teeth and the length of her claws. He made two turns round the sitting-room, three round the parlour, and then there was a smash, a cras hand a howl.

With the cat clinging to his back and putting in forty-eight hours a day, the dog had taken a header through the parlour window and the Bowsers were saved.

"And this," said Mrs. Bowser, as she got downstairs and found Mr. Bowser pale faced and trembling and his knees bending under him—"this is transmigration, is it!"

"I thought—I thought——" he stammered, but she pointed to the broken window and interrupted:

"Yes, I know, and that's the result of it! You'd better let souls and dogs and transmigration alone and find some boards to nail over that till morning."

Mr. Bowser tried to work up a bluff and save his dignity, but it was a vain effort. There was a feeling as if a cold iron were being moved up and down his spine, and the wobble of his knees took his breath away.

M. QUAD.

Next Week:

HE TAKES A COUNTRY HOUSE FOR THE SUMMER.

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The Three Receipts.

THERE were only two persons who could have stolen the Andelstone diamonds; John Record, solicitor, deceased, and Patrick Desmond, his confidential clerk, who had fled to South Africa. So common report shared the guilt between the two.

John Record's wife and children knew well enough that he, who had never done an unkind or unjust act all his life, was innocent. So they decided that I, his eldest son, should go to South Africa in pursuit of the absconding clerk.

Desmond was not a man whom we should have suspected of theft had there been any alternative. A hare-brained, hot-tempered, "home rule" Irishman, his hatred of the tyrannical Saxons in general seemed tempered by impulsive affection for many in particular.

He had appeared devoted to my father, who trusted him implicitly. When he was dying and Lady Andelstone sent for her jewels, he just whispered, "Desmond."

When the messenger came back to say that Desmond was nowhere to be found he was past speech. He died that evening; and next morning we opened the bank-safe with his key; but the diamonds were not there and Desmond never re-appeared.

A report reached us later that he was in the Transvaal, among the Boers whom everyone but our government knew to be preparing for war. My own theory was that he had sold the diamonds to assist in these preparations, rather than for his personal gain.

We scraped together some £4,000—about a fifth of the value of the jewels—and offered the amount to Lady Andelstone, but she refused to touch a penny of it. She was certain, she said, that our father was not to blame, and equally certain that Desmond, whom she disliked, was.

She was a wealthy woman, in her own right, and the value of the jewels mattered very little to her. She was willing, if need be, to pay to recover them, as they had long been treasured in her family.

"I trust you implicitly in the matter, Mr. Record, as I trusted your father," she assured me.

Her kindness made me doubly anxious to recover them and I set off without delay.

I arrived at the Cape in July, and found everyone full of the impending war. I was warned that my search in the Transvaal for Desmond would be as full of danger as difficulty. So I bought a rifle and a revolver—I could shoot a little already—and practised diligently for a week.

At the end of this time I had become a marksman, which afterwards stood me in good stead. Then I went to Pretoria, and for the next two months travelled from place to place in the Transvaal, and learnt to hate the Boers as heartily as they hated me and all my race. Possibly future historians may decide that there were faults upon both sides. I do not pretend to be an impartial judge.

It was, however, soon plain to me that the two races would never live peaceably together till the supremacy of one or the other was assured. I had not suffered the Boer arrogance for a week before I was ready to bear my part in the struggle.

Just before matters reached the crisis, a villainous half-Boer, half-Portuguese, Van Dupluy by name, came to me in Johannesburg.

"You seek for news of the man Desmond," he said. "Is it so?"

"Yes," I replied.

"You will a price pay?" he asked with a leer.

"A small price," I answered cautiously, knowing the man by disrepute.

"Fifty pound, eh?"

I laughed.

"Fifty shillings! And dear at the price. Besides, how do I know that you will tell me the truth?"

He scowled.

"See!" he snarled between his teeth.

He pulled the shirt away from the back of his neck

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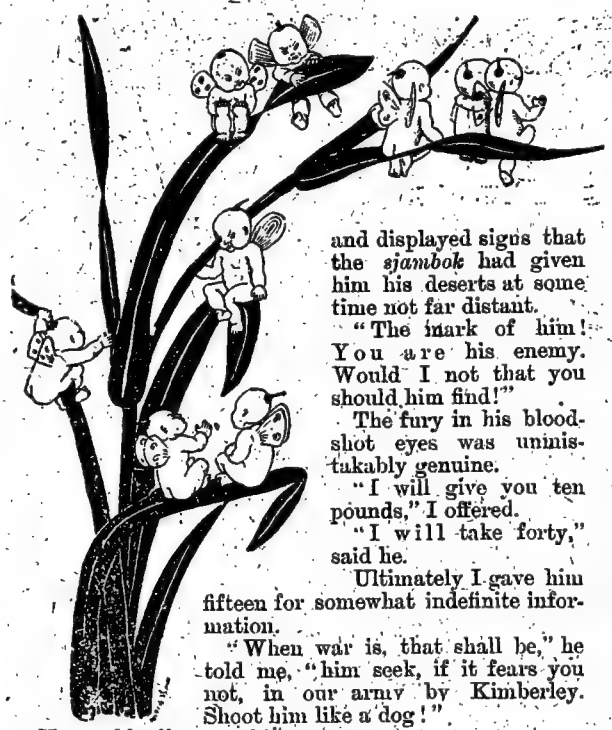

and displayed signs that the *sjambok* had given him his deserts at some time not far distant.

"The mark of him! You are his enemy. Would I not that you should him find!"

The fury in his blood-shot eyes was unmistakably genuine.

"I will give you ten pounds," I offered.

"I will take forty," said he.

Ultimately I gave him fifteen for somewhat indefinite information.

"When war is, that shall be," he told me, "him seek, if it fears you not, in our army by Kimberley. Shoot him like a dog!"

He would tell me nothing more.

The next day I heard of Kruger's ultimatum, and escaped, none too soon, into Natal.

Abler pens than mine have recorded the horrors of that journey. I will merely mention that we were huddled together so closely that we could scarcely breathe, and that a child, who was ailing, died during the journey.

The Boers at the halting places struck at us with whips, or fired revolvers just over our heads, when we asked for water for her. I was so exhausted myself that I had to lay up for a week at Ladysmith.

Then I got to Durban and took a steamer round to Cape Town, where I found that passenger traffic to Kimberley had stopped. So I joined the Mounted Rifles and went up with Lord Methuen's army till we were checked at Magersfontein.

During our long stay in the neighbourhood I set a Kaffir spy to work, and ascertained the whereabouts of Desmond. Incidentally I obtained information which led to fifty irregulars, including myself, being sent off on a sudden expedition one dark night.

A detachment of Boers and their mercenaries were mounting a gun upon Val Ran Kop, to strengthen their extreme left flank against attack in certain contingencies.

Our main object was to blow up the gun. My object was to capture Desmond, who, according to my informant, was among the party.

"Enemy to the North, sir."

The captain shrugged his shoulders.

"Hurry up, men."

Two artificers were working furiously at the breach of the gun in case the explosion should not damage it sufficiently. I was examining a dozen dead Boers to see if Desmond were among them.

"Enemy to the East, sir."

"Hang the enemy! Bring up the dynamite."

The men carried up the small cases and put them under the gun.

"Now lay the train," said the captain.

"Enemy to the West, sir!"

"Get to your horses, men. I'll fire it."

We ran down the slope and mounted. Our commander struck a match which went out; then another sheltered in his hands. Then he lowered it and a soft fizzing began.

"Enemy in front!" called the lieutenant.

The captain ran down the kopje with a laugh.

"Anyhow we've spoilt the gun," he said cheerily; but when he saw the force between us and our camp he looked grave. They numbered some 200. We could see them distinctly upon the moonlight plain. We ourselves were in a shadow for the moment.

"Shall we try to edge round them?" some one asked.

"No use. We should be caught between two fires. Go forward gently till the explosion. Then rush straight on. Everyone for himself. It's the only chance."

We cantered gently forward. We could not tell if we were seen, but the party came rapidly towards us. We could hear the thud, thud, thud of their galloping horses through the still night. I fidgetted with my rifle, and thought mechanically of irrelevant things, as one does at such times.

Crash!

There was an upheaval of smoke and flame in our rear. The horses broke into a gallop of their own accord except mine which reared and refused to proceed till my comrades were a couple of hundred yards ahead, fighting hand to hand with the foe. Most of them broke through with three or four Boers in pursuit of each. The rest were cut down, so I turned off to the right with three men close behind me.

Crack, crack, crack!

Three bullets whizzed by my head.

Crack, crack, crack!

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Two more flew by, and a third grazed my sleeve.

I turned in my saddle and fired at the nearest horse. He fell heavily, throwing his rider over his head.

Crack, crack!

My horse had a flesh wound which merely spurred him on.

I fired again and missed. Then we came to some long grass and shrubs. My horse stumbled twice and nearly fell. I patted and coaxed him, and he gained twenty yards by a grand spurt across a small field. Then we came to rough ground.

He stumbled again and the two Boers closed upon me from either side. We leapt a hedge blazing away with our revolvers. There was a crushing pain in my left leg; an empty saddle on my right.

I fired at my remaining foeman and saw him totter in his saddle. Then our horses collided and fell; and we were hurled into the darkness side by side.

When I recovered from the shock and became used to the dim light I saw my enemy's hands groping feebly about the ground—doubtless for his revolver. Mine was still in my hand.

As I could not rise, I turned on my side and aimed at him.

"You—needn't—fire," he gasped. "I'm done for."

I hesitated.

"If I don't shoot you, you'll shoot me," I growled.

"No—I give you my word of honour."

The moon suddenly lit up his white face.

"Desmond!" I ejaculated.

He started.

"Who are you?" he asked faintly.

"The last man to whom you should talk of your honour. The son of John Record,"

"I never wronged him in my life," he said with sudden energy.

"Do you mean to say that you did not take Lady Andelstone's diamonds?" I demanded.

"Lady Andelstones diamonds! I!"

He tried to raise himself but fell back with a groan.

"Water!"

I dragged myself near enough to give him a drink from my bottle.

"Tell me what has happened."

I told him, somewhat incoherently,

The wound in my leg was paining horribly, and there was an ugly gash in my head, where I had struck the ground. I found it difficult to collect my thoughts.

When I had finished he laughed a faint laugh that was half a moan.

"So you think I took them! I! Look——"

The rest of his words were lost in a dizzy mist.

I was fainting.

When I came to, my head was on a stranger's knee, and my arms had been taken away. I was in the hands of the Boers.

They lifted me upon a stretcher, and I saw that Desmond was on another close by.

"You spared me," he said. "So they are going to take you to the English camp. Good luck!"

"The diamonds?" I cried.

"Look in your father's office desk; secret drawer; back of second from top; right hand side."

Then they carried me away.

When I reached home—I was invalided—I found that the desk had been sold; but fortunately the auctioneer was able to repurchase it, at a slight advance upon the sale price.

When it arrived we had it set down in the middle of the drawing-room and proceeded to search for the secret drawer.

After a quarter of an hour my sister Flo, who is quick-witted discovered it. The secret, like all secrets when you know them, was very simple after all.

But when the drawer came out we gave a united cry of dismay. There were no diamonds or valuables of any

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sort, only a heap of old papers connected with various secrets entrusted to my father.

"So the scoundrel deceived me after all," I said bitterly. "I might have known it."

"I suppose we had better destroy the papers," suggested my mother with a sigh. "We have no right, really, to read them."

I growled assent, and the rest nodded, except Flo.

"No," she exclaimed. "Not till we have seen if they say anything about the diamonds."

I took the bundle again and glanced through it. Towards the middle I spied Lady Andelstone's signature, and pulled out this receipt:

"Received, April 18th, '99, my jewels from Mr. John Record.—MARY ANDELSTONE."

We stared at one another in speechless astonishment.

"Do not judge her till you have heard her story," said my mother at last. "We have misjudged poor Desmond already."

"Unfortunately," I said, "there is no room for doubt in the present instance. She has evidently had the jewels, disposed of them for some purpose of her own; and thrown the blame upon my dead father."

I sent the servant to fetch a cab, and put on my overcoat. Flo begged to be allowed to accompany me, and I reluctantly consented.

"I have an idea, Fred," she said. "No, I can't tell you; but I *must* come."

So I took her.

If I had not done so we should probably never have discovered the rights of the matter. For, when I showed the receipt to Lady Andelstone, she went first red, then white, and finally refused to discuss the matter.

"I acknowledge the receipt," she said; and that was all that she would tell me.

Then my sister spoke.

"Will you swear that it is your writing, Lady Andelstone?"

Her ladyship started violently.

"Have I repudiated it?"

"Here is a former receipt of yours." Flo held them side by side. "Suppose an expert compared them."

Lady Andelstone went whiter than ever.

"It is mine," she said. "or—or—written by my authority."

"By whom? Do you wish to answer in court?"

"I will not say another word," she declared in a trembling voice, "there or here."

"But suppose I could show you a way to clear our father's memory, and at the same time avert disgrace from anyone dear to you? This must have been presented by some one near to you, or the writing would have been scrutinised and the forgery detected."

Her ladyship wiped her parched lips with a dainty handkerchief.

"What do you want?" she asked hoarsely.

"A receipt for your jewels—which we have found, let us suppose in the secret drawer."

Lady Andelstone dragged herself slowly from her chair, staggered across the room, sat down at a dainty desk and wrote the receipt. She handed it to me without a word, and we rose to depart; but my sister lingered.

"I am *so* sorry," she said gently. "So very sorry."

Lady Andelstone threw her arms round her.

"My husband!" she sobbed. "Heaven forgive him! My husband!"

OWEN OLIVER.

"TOMMY," said a fond father to his little boy, who had received a linen-mounted book of pictures as a present, "What are you crying for?"

"Because I can't tear my picture book, papa," was the ingenuous reply.

LITTLE ETHEL: "Mamma, I wish you'd wash Willie Prettie's face."

Mamma: "The idea! He's not my little boy. I have nothing to do with him."

Little Ethel: "But I have. We's become engaged, an' I want to kiss him."

"WHAT's wrong with our new midget? He doesn't seem to draw."

Manager: "Of course not. See what a mess you've made of the advertisements. You've put his height at three feet. Make it thirty-six inches, and the people wil lcome with a rush."

"GREAT SCOTT, man! what are you doing with four alarm clocks in your room?"

"I want to try and get a little sleep."

"How can that help you?"

"My wife and baby have gone for a visit, and everything is so quiet. I can't close my eyes."

SHE: "You won't object to have my dear mamma live with us after we are married, will you?"

He (a young physician): "Not at all. In fact she'll be most welcome."

"I'm so glad you feel that way."

"Yes; you see she is always ailing, and I really need somebody to experiment on."

A YOUNG minister, unexpectedly called upon to address a Sunday-school, asked, to gain time:

"Children, what shall I speak about?"

A little girl on the front seat, who had herself committed to memory several declamations, held up her hand, and in a shrill voice inquired:

"What do you know?"

AT a bazaar superintended by some professional beauties of London a sailor lad stood in front of one of the stalls in breathless admiration. Then, taking a sixpence from his pocket, he laid it shyly upon the table and passed on.

"Won't you have something for your money?" asked the fairest of the attendants.

"I've had more than my money's worth already," answered Jack gallantly, and walked on quite satisfied.

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NEW SERIAL STORY.

A ROMANCE OF LAND AND SEA.

BY WILLIAM WESTALL.

Author of "With the Red Eagle," "The Phantom City," "Nigel Fortescue," etc., etc.

SUMMARY.

Major Wyvenhoe leaves England on the *Campanella* with a detachment of troops, raised by Major Barnish, to help the Venezuelans in their struggle for liberty. Major Barnish is accompanied on the vessel by his wife. At Cork a detachment of Irishmen is taken on board together with General Molyneux, who is connected with the Venezuelan Army, his secretary and chaplain. When the vessel has been out a few days Major Barnish meets with a fatal accident, and on that same day a mutiny breaks out among the troops, but it is speedily quelled. On the day of Barnish's death a sail is sighted, and the vessel proves to be the *Dulcinea*, a Spanish warship. The *Campanella* is ordered to stop so that her cargo may be examined. The captain (Cautley) objects, and while negotiations are going on, the *Dulcinea* is boarded by a party from the *Campanella*, when the guns are spiked and the vessel put out of working order. General Molyneux, who had come with the party unasked, kills a Spanish sailor, and is left with the Spaniards as a prisoner.

Shortly after this a small sailing boat is seen and stopped by the *Campanella*, and it is ascertained that the chief towns on the coast are still occupied by the patriots. As Captain Cautley does not know the Venezuelan coast well a pilot has to be obtained, and it is found that Conroy, one of the chief mutineers, is able to act as such, and the course of the ship is intrusted to him.

CHAPTER VI.

THE CAPTURE OF THE *Santa Marta*.

THE cove or lagoon, whither Conroy piloted us, fully justified his description, being so secluded and begirt with great trees that there was no sea view even from the mast-head, and, to our misery, no sea breeze, the want of which made it like a furnace by day and an oven by night. Moreover, to the discomforts of intense heat were added the onslaughts of myriads of mosquitoes and sandflies, which drove us nearly frantic. But as the brig was so moored as to command the narrow entrance to the cove (into which she had been warped), and the country covered with an impenetrable growth of underwood and prickly-pear trees, we were well protected both on the land side and the sea side, though it was not pleasant to think of what our fate might be if we were blockaded.

These prickly-pear trees are the most formidable defensive works I ever encountered. They tear the clothes off your back and bury their arrow-like points in your skin, poisoning the blood and inflicting painful wounds which heal with difficulty and sometimes mortify. Forcing a way through them is out of the question, and the few paths made by the natives are so narrow that contact with these cannibal-like thorns, which dart on their victim like birds of prey, cannot be avoided.

For the rest, Margarita is a hot and thirsty land, and for the most part, a barren land, and so dry withal, that except in and shortly after the rainy season water has to be imported, and the inhabitants live principally on fish and by fishing.

Not long before there had been a prosperous pearl fishery leased to Messrs. Rundle and Bridge, of London, but when General Morillo occupied the island, he had all the divers (who were suspected of "patriotism"), together with their wives and families, knocked on the head; so the industry perished, no others caring to run the double risk of being eaten by sharks and slaughtered by Spaniards.

Altogether, Margarita could not be described as a desirable dwelling place, the cove being perhaps the least desirable part of it, and we were all pleased when on the day after our arrival Cautley, said with great emphasis, "We will clear out of this hole before this time to-morrow."

But we had first to gather more precise information as to the position of our friends and the movements of our enemies than had yet been forthcoming, for which purpose one of the ship's boats was sent out to make inquiries, in charge of Hankin, the second officer, with whom went Conroy as pilot and myself as interpreter, each wearing the national costume of Venezuela, a shirt and a pair of trousers, the former garment outside the latter, and a straw hat.

I had also to keep an eye on Conroy.

"I don't think he means either to desert or betray us," the captain had said; "but if he offers to do either, shoot him."

Conroy did not offer to do either, probably because he had nothing to gain thereby, so I was not called upon to act as executioner, greatly to my satisfaction, killing men in cold blood, even though they are miscreants, not being my *métier*.

It was the hottest day I had ever known; the heat of the sun, together with the heat reverberated by the rocks, made us perspire so profusely that we could only see by

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continually wiping our eyes, and our clothes became as wet as if they had been dipped in water.

Out at sea it was probably cooler, but as there was a possibility of falling in with a Spanish cruiser, we did not think it prudent to venture far from the coast, with which Conroy seemed quite familiar.

He piloted us into a small inlet where we found swarms of mosquitoes, and a hamlet, consisting of half-a-dozen roofs on stilts, inhabited, as might appear, by lanky, long-nosed pigs, naked children, and dirty, scantily-clad women, who knew nothing, and the men folk were all away fishing. So we went on, and, after awhile, found one of their boats, albeit rather further out at sea than we quite liked, though, as we presently ascertained, there was little or nothing to fear, the cruisers seldom coming so far north, and owing to the shallowness of the water thereabouts, always giving the land a wide berth.

At first the fishermen regarded us with suspicion, but on learning that we were against the Spaniards they became quite communicative and told us all they knew, which turned out to be all we wanted to know.

Pampatar had not been attacked, nor was there any sign of an impending attack.

Two Spanish sloops of war were cruising between Margarita and the Main, though now and then they would weather the north point and come round the other way. But for the most part one was so close in shore and the other in the offing, on the look-out for transports which, as was said, were bringing troops from England for service in Venezuela.

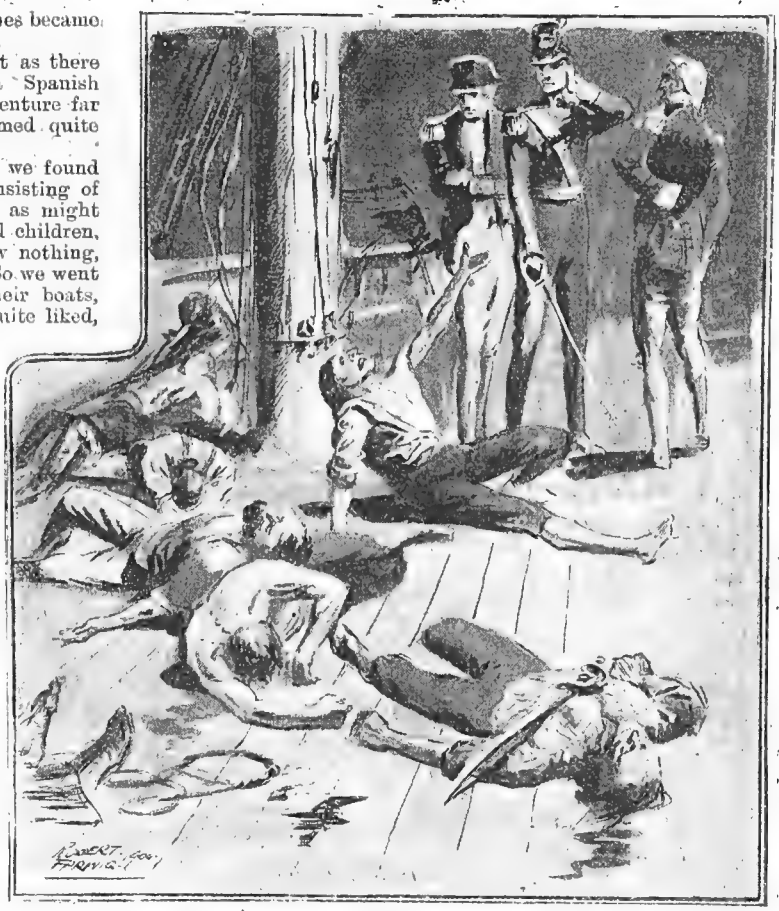
My retort confirmed Cautley in his decision to leave the cove that night or early next morning, so timing his departure as to be off Pampatar shortly before dawn.

"It is then we are most likely to catch the inshore sloop unprepared; and if I can get the weather gage, I shall give her a broadside, and carry her by boarding before the other can come to her help. It will be a fine chance for your fellows to show their mettle."

The remainder of the day was taken up in making ready for battle. The magazine was opened, boxes of round shot, grape, and canister were brought on deck, rammers, sponges, and canisters placed near the guns, cartridges served out, muskets cleaned, flints examined, cutlasses sharpened, and to the strain of suspense succeeded the bustle of preparation, greatly to the delight both of soldiers and sailors, who were weary of the long voyage and spoiling for a fight.

Cautley studied his charts and had several consultations with Conroy touching tides, currents, shoals, and soundings.

About midnight the *Campanella* was warped out of the cove and stood out to sea, edging away from Margarita northward on the starboard tack, the object being to gain a wide offing, and then "bearing up round," run to Pampatar before the wind, which in that part of the Caribbean sea generally blows from east to west. The operation was rather tedious, and as it involved frequent tacking, our progress at the beginning was rather slow. But the weather and the night favoured our design. Though there was no moon, the stars shone so brilliantly that Cautley had quite as much light as he wanted, and we were little more than an hour's sail from Pampatar when they began to pale.



Many of the Spaniards were killed and wounded.

Everybody was on the alert, look-out men were stationed at the masthead, in the bows, and aft, and the skipper and his mates continually swept the horizon with their night glasses.

But for a time all to no purpose, and some of us were beginning to fear there would be no fighting, which after so much preparation and high strung expectation would have been a great disappointment, when the man at the masthead sang out: "Sail ho!"

"Where away?" asked the captain.

"On the port bow."

"Can you make her out?"

"Not quite."

Then a moment afterwards:

"A single-masted ship on the starboard tack."

The stranger could presently be discerned from the quarter-deck, and, after a long look through his glass, Cautley pronounced her to be one of the Spanish sloops. Whether she had sighted us was as yet uncertain, but there could be nothing so sure as that she would do so, and our captain took measures to deceive her as to our character and intentions, for if the Spanish captain suspected we were armed and meant fighting he might wait for his consort, and we were not strong enough to tackle them both. True, we should probably be able in any event either to beat them or give them the slip, but that was not enough, Cautley had made up his mind to sail into port with a prize.

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So instead of bearing boldly up to the sloop, as though he meant mischief, the skipper ordered every stitch of canvas to be spread, as though he wanted to avoid her. But as it would have defeated his object to go too fast, a heavy boom was drooped astern which checked the ship's way.

The trick succeeded. The Spaniard shook out his huge mainsail, hoisted his foresail, and altered his course so as to get between us and Pampatar, which was the very thing we wanted.

The deck had already been cleared for action, every man was at his station, and two hundred soldiers with loaded muskets were lying behind the quarters, but we were not to show our teeth until the last moment.

Meanwhile the sloop came on as if her commander either expected no resistance or counted on an easy victory. Cautley, on the other hand, contrived to keep the weather gage, and a collision being now inevitable, the boom was hauled on board, and the *Campanella* went ahead at a pace that evidently surprised the Spaniard, who straightway sent a shot across our bows as a gentle hint to heave to. No notice being taken, he fired another, which grazed the foremast and nearly knocked a seaman's head off.

"That is from his bow chaser, he has got a 'Long Tom,'" quoth Cautley coolly.

"He seems to be ready; anyhow, he is more prepared than you expected. All his men are at quarters," I said.

Arismendez was broad-shouldered, deep-chested, and built like an athlete.

"He is not prepared for the reception I am going to give him. Run out the guns; up with the flag!"

The Spaniards now began to fire in earnest, but owing to the relative position of the ships most of their shots went wide, though we were several times hulled, and the "Long Tom" hit us repeatedly, sending two poor fellows to their account.

Not until the *Campanella* had gained the position for which Cautley had been manœuvring did he give the order to fire.

Great was the havoc wrought by that one discharge. The sloop was raked fore and aft; many of the Spaniards were killed and wounded, among them the man at the wheel, and there being no one ready to take his place, she flew up into the wind, on which our captain ranged alongside and grappled, after giving them a volley of musketry at point-blank range. Then he gave the order to board, on which my men leapt on the sloop's deck, wildly cheering, and there followed the fiercest hand-to-hand fight I had ever seen. The Spaniards, driven to bay, fought a hopeless battle with the ferocity of despair, for they were outnumbered by two to one, and seeing that unless they yielded all must perish, I called to them in their own language to surrender.

"Will you spare our lives, then?" demanded an officer whose face was black with powder and streaked with blood.

"Certainly," I answered.

"On your honour?"

"On the honour of an Englishman."

He ordered his men to lay down their arms, I bade my bugler sound the recall, and the combat, which had been going on all over the deck, ceased.

The officer, who turned out to be the captain, tendered me his sword, which I refused to accept, and, after complimenting him on his courage, inquired why, when resistance had become altogether hopeless and there was no chance of saving his ship, he had not hauled down his flag.

"Because we thought that, as you were fighting under the Venezuelan ensign, you gave no quarter."

"And do the Venezuelans never give quarter?"

"Never. If you were Venezuelans—patriots they call themselves—our wounded would be thrown to the sharks, and the rest of us either hacked to pieces or hanged."

I was too polite to believe the gentleman, who, however, evidently believed what he said. But I could not. It was too horrible. His name, as he told me, was Moro—Don Tadeo Moro—that of the sloop, *Santa Marta*. She was in a dreadful condition. Our broadside had destroyed a great part of the bulwarks, damaged the rigging and ploughed up the deck, which was slippery with blood and strewn with mangled bodies and wounded men. The former were disposed of in the only way possible; for the latter, all was done that could be done. As the sloop's cockpit was already crowded and her surgeon overwhelmed with work, many of them were removed to the *Campanella* and placed under the care of our own surgeons.

We, too, had suffered, though not nearly so much as the Spaniard, and it took some time to repair our damages, and put the *Santa Marta* in a condition to be taken back to Pampatar.

Meanwhile the other sloop had been sighted to the sou'-west, between us and the Main.

"We were not much too soon," said Cautley as he pointed her out to me. "An hour later and we should have had to fight them both or run for it. I am not going to run now, and if she comes much nearer I'll try conclusions with her."

The second sloop did come nearer, but getting no answer to her signals, moved off and headed towards the coast.

"Do you think we can overhaul her before she gets too close to Cumana, Couroy?" asked the skipper of the pilot, who was close behind us.

"I would not advise you to try, sir. She sails fast. Cumana is not far off, and if the wind were to fall off after

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you had weathered Point Escarpca, you might find yourself in a fix, especially if there are gunboats in the bay, as is very likely."

The advice seemed sound. I seconded it, Cautley acted on it, and the brig and the sloop, the latter with a prize crew on board, were presently bearing up for Pampatar.

As we neared the port, three guns were fired, and Cautley, taking this for a salute (though it turned out to be an alarm signal), answered with three guns from each vessel. Then, in order to reassure the garrison and the inhabitants, who might think we were Spaniards, he ordered the Union Jack to be displayed over the stern of each vessel, and the Venezuelan flag at the head of our fore-top-gallant mast.

We had no sooner anchored than several boats came out, one of which contained two men in uniform, whom we took for officers of the port. On learning whom we were they seemed greatly pleased, and said that General Arismendez, the Governor, and General Urdenetta, his second in command, were at the Government House, and invited the captain of the *Campanella* and the commander of the troops to honour them with a visit, on which Cautley ordered his gig to be lowered, and we went on shore.

The two generals received us with great cordiality, and when I told them of the capture of the *Santa Marta*, overwhelmed us with thanks, compliments, and embraces. Arismendez put his arms round me, patted me on the back with both hands, and kissed me on both cheeks, while Urdenetta treated my companion in like fashion. Cautley made a wry face, fortunately unobserved by our hosts, whose effusive greetings would have been more agreeable if they had not smelt so excessively of garlic.

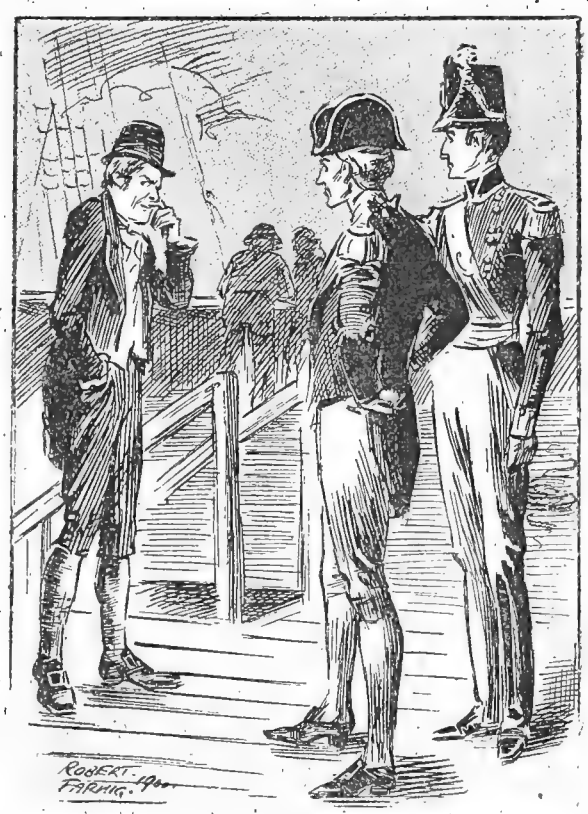
Notwithstanding the warmth of our welcome, Arismendez did not at first impress me favourably. He was about fifty years old, but looked older — broad-shouldered, deep-chested, and built like an athlete. His features were Spanish, his complexion and hair Indian, his furrowed, weather-beaten face was scarred with wounds. The general was much given to smiling, but his smiles were not pleasant; and his laugh, owing to the distortion produced by his scars, made him look absolutely appalling. Yet, as I afterwards discovered, he was one of the ablest of his country's leaders, and though, perhaps, as cruel as a man of his blood can be, honest, honourable, and straightforward, qualities very rare at that time, and even yet, in Venezuela.

Either by accident or neglect he had received no advice of our coming, and on hearing that Major Barnish had defrayed the entire cost of the expedition, of raising the troops and of the munitions of war we had brought with us, he appeared deeply touched, protesting that so much devotion to the cause of Venezuelan freedom deserved to be handsomely recompensed, that the matter should be brought before Congress, who would no doubt pass an order for the immediate payment to Mrs. Barnish of all that her husband had laid out, so soon as the finances of the Republic were in a little better condition.

Then, with one of his queer smiles, he added: "If we had any money I would take the responsibility of making Mrs. Barnish a payment on account. But we are unfortunately very poor."

As for the *Campanella*, she would make a valuable addition to the national navy, he should recommend her acquisition, and Mrs. Barnish might name her own price. The troops and the *Campanella*'s ship's company were also to be handsomely rewarded for the capture of the *Santa Marta*, and Captain Cautley might regard his appointment to a command in the Venezuelan navy as assured.

Nothing could have been more satisfactory, though I did not quite like the general's qualifications about the finances of the Republic. On the other hand, I harboured no doubt as to his sincerity, and felt sure that he meant all that he had said. But the Castilian tongue lends itself to exaggeration, and I had not yet learnt that Spanish Creoles are given to promising, in perfect good faith, more than they



"I don't want to have anything more to do with you, Conroy."

are able to perform, and that almost any other Venezuelan in the general's position would have promised payment in a month or a week without any qualification whatever.

Cautley was highly elated at the turn things were taking.

"What a relief it will be for poor Mrs. Barnish," he exclaimed, and I had to be the interpreter of his warmest thanks to General Arismendez, as also General Urdenetta, whom he invited to pay a visit to the *Campanella*. The compliment pleased them, and the invitation was graciously accepted.

As we were about to take our leave I bethought me of the prisoners, and asked the chief how we should dispose of them.

"What prisoners?"

"The survivors of the *Santa Marta's* crew."

"You have not killed them all, then?"

"No. Only those of them who fell in action."

"Ah! I understand. You English don't kill your prisoners of war. Well, send them ashore and I will save you the trouble," answered Arismendez, with a laugh that made him look like an hyena.

"Pardon me, general, but that must not be," I said respectfully, but firmly. "I induced these men to surrender by promising them, on my honour, that their lives should be spared."

The general laughed again, his face worked convulsively, and I thought there was going to be an explosion, perhaps a quarrel, for I would have perished rather than permit the Spaniards to be put to death. But by a strong effort he suppressed his anger.

"Very well, they are your prisoners, not mine. Do with them what you will," he said, "only they must not land.

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Towards the end of the banquet several orators were often on their legs at the same time.

So long as I am in command here I will not suffer a Spaniard to live in Margarita, and even though I were disposed to do so, I would not answer for my men."

I thanked Arismendez for conceding so much, little as it was—and, considering what manner of man he was, he deserved my thanks—though Cautley and I went away feeling a good deal less elated than we had done a few minutes previously.

"What shall we do with these wretched Spaniards? They are not safe here," I said.

"They must be off to-night in the sloop's boats; and if they won't hold them all, I will give them one of mine."

I was very glad I had not reported the mutiny to General Arismendez, and so told the skipper.

"Why?" he asked.

"He would have had all the mutineers shot, and though several of them richly deserve it, the execution of so many, besides being unjust, would have a bad effect on the other men and be a very bad beginning."

"Very. But what will you do? Mutiny is not an offence to be lightly passed over."

"The best I can in the circumstances. Dismiss Price and Bryan and about twenty more from the force and leave them to get home as best they can, merely telling Arismendez that they misbehaved so badly during the voyage, that I have lost all confidence in them, and after the lesson the others have already received, I think they will prove amenable to discipline, especially as I shall let them know what the consequences will be if they play any tricks."

"Death?"

"Yes. Unless I am greatly mistaken the general would deal as ruthlessly with mutineers as he deals with Spaniards."

On our return to the *Campanella* I paid the men who had returned to their duty the balance of their bounties, and informed the rank and file of the mutineers that I had decided to give them another chance, and what would happen if they misused it. The ringleaders, however, I kept under arrest, and in ignorance of the fate in store for them. This done we settled with Conroy, but gave him no thanks, for he was the worst offender of the lot, and should have been the most severely punished, yet we were letting him off scot free, and putting money in his purse.

"Cannot you keep me as pilot, Captain Cautley?" he said. "You won't find anybody who knows these seas and coasts as well as I do. I know the Orinoco, too, and could take your ship up to Angostura if you are ordered there."

"I daresay you could, but I don't want to have anything more to do with you, Conroy. You may stay on board another night, but to-morrow the troops disembark, and you must go ashore and find quarters for yourself; and mind what you are about! If I hear of your playing any hanky-panky tricks, I shall report you to the Governor. You know what that means."

"I guess I do. All the same, Captain Cautley, it would have been worth your while to give me a 'berth,'" answered Conroy with an evil smile, and then turned sullenly away.

"You have made an enemy of a revengeful man," quoth I.

"Well, you surely would not have me make a friend of the rascal, would you?"

"Not at all. Only it might have been better policy to refuse his request less curtly, and say nothing about the governor. He has been very useful and gave us good advice about chasing the other sloop."

"That is true, but the real grievance is my refusing his request for a berth; which was quite out of the question. Besides, how can he hurt us? Not by stirring up another mutiny on board for he won't be on board, and he is not such a fool as to attempt aught of the sort with your men ashore. He knows what the consequences would be. I have sent the gig for Don Tadeo; we must arrange about his departure. He is coming now," pointing to the *Santa Marta*.

The gig was about a hundred yards from the sloop, and following her were several boats thronged with townspeople, who had come off to see the *Campanella* and her prize.

"What are the beggars shouting?"

"*Ahorcadle! Degalladle!*" I answered, after listening a minute or two, the cries being so confused and discordant that their purport was hard to catch.

"And that means?"

"Hang him! Cut his throat!"

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"By Jove! What a bloodthirsty lot they must be! Women, too!"

"Yes, their shouts are the loudest; at any rate, the shrillest."

"The Spaniards must be sent off at once, anyhow, as soon as possible, or we shall have further trouble. In the night would be best, don't you think, when these furies are abed?"

"In the night, by all means. Were they to start by day, they would stand a good chance of being pursued and massacred."

The gig presently drew under our lee quarter, followed by the Margaritanos, who were still clamouring, though a little less vociferously, for Don Tadeo's blood, who sat in the stern sheets as impassive as a bronze statue, which he rather resembled, his features being massive and clearly cut, and his naturally dark skin tanned to the colour of mahogany.

Without casting a glance behind him, he mounted the ship's side, and on reaching the deck greeted us with the high-bred courtesy of a Spanish hidalgo.

I told him briefly—for we knew not how soon the governor might come on board—that as General Arismendez would neither let them and his people disembark nor protect them, we had decided to let them go away in their own boats, and having regard to the temper of the townspeople, we thought they had better leave after nightfall, and recommended Don Tadeo to take measures accordingly.

"You are very kind, señores, and I am very grateful," he said in his stately way. "I knew that the promise you made would be faithfully kept. But in releasing us you are doing more than you promised, and if it should ever be in my power I shall do as much, or more, for you. You see, señor, I was quite right in saying that the Venezuelans kill their prisoners."

"It seems so, but pray tell me whether, when they fall into your hands, you treat them any better?"

A look of lofty disdain and intense scorn swept over Don Tadeo's face.

"I am sure, señor," he said, "you do not mean to suggest that there can be any comparison between pestilent low-bred rebels and loyal subjects of his majesty the King. If you did, and I were not a prisoner——"

"But you are a prisoner, and we have no time for argument or differences," I interrupted, "we are expecting the governor, and it might be unpleasant for us all if he were to find you here. Is there room in your boats for all your people, including the wounded?"

"I think so, we are fewer than we were yesterday, and if we leave at midnight we ought to reach Fort Arraya soon after sunrise."

"As to that you will have to use your own discretion. The officer in command of the prize will be told to place the boats at your disposal, and that you are free to go whenever you think fit."

"It is all I could expect and more than I dared to hope, and now, señores, I will wish you farewell and return to my ship—I beg your pardon—the ship that was mine."

Then we all saluted, and Don Tadeo went over the side and was rowed back to the *Sante Marta*.

"My ship! Rather good that, wasn't it?" said Cautley, laughing; "he got out of it very well, though. Why did not you put in 'and never will be again.' If I knew Spanish well enough I would have done."

"For three reasons. I did not think of it, it would not have been polite, and he is very touchy."

"I should think he is touchy. How he flew up when you asked whether the Spaniards don't measure out to the Venezuelans the same measure as the Venezuelans mete out to them? I begin to see how the land lies, the Venezuelans having been treated like dogs, are retaliating like fiends."

Soon afterwards came the generals with their respective staffs, all in gala uniform, and very grand. I rather feared that my refusal to let General Arismendez massacre the Spanish prisoners might have set him against me, but so far from showing coldness or displeasure, he was, if possible, more affable than before. I introduced him to Mrs. Barnish, to whom he said many handsome things about her late husband, laid himself (metaphorically) at her feet, and assured her that all he possessed was at her disposal.

The poor woman, as I could see, was rather frightened, especially when the governor smiled, which was often, but she bore up very well and made a touching little speech in reply, which I had the honour of interpreting, and when he asked her to make his house her home, and mentioned that Senora Arismendez would pay her a visit later in the day, she brightened up wonderfully, and the skipper whispered to me that he had never seen Mrs. Barnish look so handsome.

The governor next invited us—Cautley, myself, and all our officers, to a banquet which he proposed to give in our honour in the evening. I said something, as also did the skipper, about not liking to leave the ships and troops to the under officers, but Arismendez brushed this objection aside and we were fain to accept the invitation as it was given.

Father Bartrum was also introduced at his own request, and the General was agreeably surprised to find that we had a Catholic chaplain.

"*Caramba!* Some of you are Christians, then! I thought you were all *ereticos*," he exclaimed pleasantly.

His reverence accompanied us to the banquet, and, I am sorry to say, got very tipsy, like a good many others, for there was no stint either of food or drink, and the *vin du pays*, especially some fine old white Carupano rum, was very potent. The guests were numerous, and many toasts were drunk and many speeches made. Indeed, towards the end of the banquet several orators were often on their legs at the same time. It lasted till past midnight, and had a dramatic and picturesque termination. Two gentlemen mounted the table, and after a few wildly incoherent observations, tried to rush into each other's arms, but missing their aim, fell on the floor with a mighty crash.

On this Cautley and I thought we had better be going, and took our leave of General Arismendez, who, though he had drunk deep, had not lost his senses.

When we had got all our men together, a matter of some difficulty, we went down to the jetty where our boat was waiting.

"Go first to the sloop to put Mr. Benn aboard (the third officer in charge of the prize), then to the *Campanella*," said the skipper to the coxswain, to which the coxswain answered, "Ay, ay, sir."

"I see no lights on the sloop, Mr. Benn. How is that?" he demanded, sharply, when we had been a few minutes under way.

"I am sure I don't know, sir. I saw the lanterns lighted before I left her," replied Benn.

"They must have gone out, then. Very queer, though, the wind has not been high, and even if it had—Make way, men!"

The *Santa Marta* was anchored a cable's length north of the *Campanella*, whose lights were quite visible, and in a line with her. Thither the boat was steered, and speedily arrived; but, barring a few small hookeys, nothing could be seen nor, though we rowed round and round, to and fro, halloing till we were hoarse, did there come any answering hail.

The sloop was gone.

(To be continued.)

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WITH APOLOGIES TO PLUMBERS.

We devote, every week, two pages of *Short Stories* to pithy, humourous anecdotes similar to those which appear in these columns. A prize of £1 1s. will be sent to the reader who submits the best storyette this week, and a copy of "The Little Legacy," by L. B. Walford, to each of those whose attempts are used. The anecdotes may be either original or selected; in the latter case the source *must* be stated. The prize of One Guinea offered for the best Storyette in this competition has been won this week by Mr. W. J. Ormiston, Cameronian Cottage, Brynhyfryd, Swansea. Attempts for this week's prize must deal with STORIES ABOUT SEASIDE LODGINGS, and must reach the Storyette Editor, *Short Stories* Office, Henrietta Street, Strand, London, W.C., by Tuesday, August 7th. Post-cards only, please.

The War Responsible.

PILEITON, the plumber, had executed some repairs for Mrs. Softcash, and presented his bill for same. Recollections of previous bills promptly paid by Mrs. Softcash without dispute had encouraged Pileiton to exert his great talents in this branch of the profession to the utmost, and the bill in question was a masterpiece. He surpassed himself, and Mrs. Softcash awoke at last to a faint suspicion that she was being overcharged.

"But, Pileiton," she remarked, "this seems a heavy charge for such small repairs."

Pileiton, prevaricating plumber, was prepared.

"All on 'count o' the war, mum," he replied.

"The war? How does it affect plumbing?"

"Lead orful scarce, mum. War Office buys it orl up for bullets, mum, so its riz appallin', mum!"

W. J. O.

Bowser Again.

BOWSER, on returning home the other afternoon, found a strange man in the kitchen smoking his pipe and chatting to the cook.

"Who is this gent'eman?" inquired Bowser suspiciously.

"I'm the plumber, sir," replied the workman; "got a little job with the pump, sir."

Bowser turned pale. "Oh, dear!" he groaned, "is it so bad as that? I was hoping you were merely the broker's man." And he staggered gloomily away.

H. E. L.

Served Her Right.

AN amusing story is told of a plumber and a widow. The latter had suddenly lost her husband, who had died intestate, and the widow, being desirous of securing the whole of his estate, persuaded a plumber—a neighbour—to take the place of her sick husband in bed while a lawyer attended to take down his will.

The plumber was quite willing, and, when the lawyer arrived, in a feeble voice bequeathed half the estate to the widow.

"What shall be done with the remainder?" asked the lawyer.

"The remainder," said he, "I give to the poor old plumber across the street, who has always been a good neighbour and a deserving man," thus securing a rich bequest to himself.

The widow was thunderstruck with the man's cunning, but did not care to expose the fraud.

E. J. B.

Turning the Tables.

A CERTAIN gentleman was very fond of laying traps for workmen who might happen to be working in or about his house by leaving money or some valuable article about.

A plumber, well aware of this fact, found a half-crown lying on the floor of one of the rooms.

He smiled as he said to himself:

"I know what that's for," and, taking a brace and a bit from his bag, he drilled a hole in the coin, and, putting a large screw-nail through it, he fastened it securely to the floor.

The gentleman has not set any traps since. L. H.

A Smart Retort.

A BOY was holding a lighted candle for his master, a plumber, who was engaged upon some repairs on a water-pipe in a dwelling-house the other day.

The boy, being rather careless, put the candle too near his master's head, and up went the latter's hair in a blaze.

The master turned round in a rage, and after inflicting punishment upon his apprentice, said:

"You stupid idiot, can ye no watch whit ye're daein', the fowk o' the house'll think we have been singeing a sheep's heid by the smell we're setting up."

"Aweel," replied the boy, sulkily, "they'll mebbe no be far wrang." L. S. B.

The Reason He Was Quiet.

A LOCAL plumber was called to execute some repairs in the kitchen of a large deaf and dumb institution recently, and after instructing the man as to the nature of the repairs, the superintendent left him to do the job.

Without a moment's loss of time, the craftsman set to work with a will, much regretting, of course, that the attractive feminine staff and everybody around him could not be talked to.

As evening and the knocking-off hour came on, the repairs having been made, the workman, shouldering his bag of tools, was turning to leave, when a bonnie, bright-eyed domestic laughingly remarked:

"Well, you're the quietest plumber we've ever had here!"

"Good heavens!" gasped he, almost dropping his tools, "why, I thought you were all deaf and dumb."

And as the poor fellow dejectedly departed, he was overheard to mournfully murmur: "Oh! it is too cruel—a whole day wasted!" W. J. B.

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A Plumber Who Hurried Himself.

MARK TWAIN gave recently a lecture to young people on "Economy of Time," and in the lecture gave the following sad incident about an "industrious" plumber:

"I once knew a plumber," said the American celebrity, "who, incredible as it may appear, finished some work he had to do for me in a great hurry. This plumber was mending a tap which protruded from the roof of my five-storeyed house, and, to speak perfectly candidly, I never knew a man finish his work so speedily. Yes, my young friends, he finished his work speedily, if not hurriedly.

"He fell off the roof."

T. A. W.

A True Tale About "W. G."

Two plumbers were working outside the Pavilion, in the Aigburth Cricket Ground, Liverpool, during a match between Gloucestershire and Lancashire.

W. G. Grace came in to bat and hit his first three balls to the boundary.

One of the plumbers was surprised at his not running, and after the third stroke, exclaimed:

"I say, Jimmy, how many trials is that big bloke going to have?" J. H.

Honest Plumbers.

THE day was young. Two men, each carrying a bag of tools, came slowly up to the corner of a street and there paused. A tram had just passed the corner, and was about twenty feet away.

"There's our tram," remarked one calmly.

"No matter," replied his companion; "we'd have to hurry to catch it. There'll be another in an hour."

And they seated themselves in a doorway and lit their pipes. They were plumbers! A. H.

The Plumber in Danger.

A PLUMBER and his assistant went one day to repair a lead cistern at a large house in Bedford Place.

After letting all the water out of the cistern the plumber got into it to mend it. As the cistern was about six feet deep, and with only a small door at the top, he had rather a difficult task to get down to the bottom, and was compelled to use a pair of steps for the purpose.

When the plumber had found the leakage and mended it he told his ass stant to go and turn the water on, while he got himself and the tools out.

The assistant, forgetting that his master would require the steps for the purpose of getting out, took them down to the cellar so as to be able to reach the stop-cock. After doing this the cook asked him to have some lunch, which he did and then went upstairs expecting to find his master ready to go home.

Instead of this, the assistant found the plumber calling out for all he was worth from the cistern, and then he suddenly remembered that it was quite impossible to get out of the cistern without the steps, and his master would no doubt have been in danger of drowning had he arrived much later. As it was the water was well up to his waist.

R. C. P.

If!

HE was anxious to get into his new house at once, and he said to the foreman plumber:

"When will you be finished with your work?"

The canny foreman truthfully replied:

"Weel, ye see it a' depends. The maister's awa' lookin' aifter anither job. If he gets it we'll be finished the nicht, but if he disna we'll no' be finished till the end o' next week."

J. S. A.

Tit for Tat.

A PLUMBER was once sent to a gentleman's house to make some repairs.

Whilst at work, the lady of the house, a sour and elderly person, entered, and noticing some of her silver plate lying about, sent for the butler, bade him lock it up, as, she said, "she did not know who was who."

The plumber heard the remark, and, calling to his apprentice, he said loudly:

"Take home my watch and chain, Jimmy, there seems to be shady people about this house." L. J. B.

A Soft Fall.

A PLUMBER, repairing the roof of a grocer's establishment in Glasgow, fell through the skylight and alighted in a large tub of butter, in which he was thoroughly immersed.

The fall being thus broken, he scrambled out of his soft bed safe and sound.

The grocer's wife, who had fainted with fright, on coming to, exclaimed:

"Come here, ma man, dinna run off till I scrape ye. There a pun or twa o' ma best butter sticking on to yer boots." F. L.

Paid by Time.

LAST winter the roof of a gentleman's house was so damaged by the snow and frost that he was obliged to send for the plumbers to repair it.

Two men and a boy came and set to work.

With such a force employed it was expected that the job would be completed in a day.

But three days passed, and still the two men and the boy kept making their appearance every morning. And yet they seemed to work hard, too; for the noise of hammering on the roof resounded through the house from morn till night.

At last the owner of the house determined to see for himself how things were proceeding. Accordingly he crept up through the skylight.

A strange sight met his eyes. The two men were comfortably settled behind the chimney stack smoking and playing cards, while one of them called out to the boy, who had a hammer in each hand:

"If you don't make more row than that, you young beggar, they'll think we're doing no work."

P. S. T.

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Mascheretti's Menagerie.

CLAUDE RAYNOR was the son of a rich Baronet in Yorkshire. He was not a man of great ability, but he was remarkable for his extreme tenacity of purpose. He called it his indomitable perseverance. His friends and family called it wilful obstinacy. He had set his heart on taking high honours at Oxford; but when he had secured his "Double First," his health gave way.

When he recovered from a serious illness, his family could not be persuaded that he needed rest and quiet; they said that what he wanted was change. So they sent him, with plenty of money in his pocket, to amuse himself in Continental capitals. But the mental evil was far greater than they suspected. Overwork had made him a monomaniac, and the form his monomania took was a passion for natural history.

One night, in Paris, when he had been strolling alone under the flaunting gaslight along the Boulevards, watching the men and women who crowded the broad pavement, sat on chairs before the cafés, or poured out of the theatres, his eye was attracted by a placard, which announced to the public, in large letters, that within might be seen the Javanese Menagerie, among whose wonders were six noble lions.

The largest lion, it said, would play at blind-man's-buff with Signor Mascheretti. "the same," added the advertisement, "who had had the honour to be severely wounded by a Royal Bengal tiger in the presence of Her Britannic Majesty."

"Poor animals! Poor imprisoned beasts!" exclaimed Raynor, talking to himself, for he had no one else to talk to. "Poor unhappy animals!—dragging out existence behind iron bars. What would I not give to restore you to freedom! You are victims of the race of man—a race to which happily I feel myself to belong no longer. I am conscious of a process of evolution into a higher state. How can any creature who partakes of the divine intelligence imagine that the flaunting, pleasure-seeking, vicious, loitering crowd of human beings that I see upon the boulevards are your superiors? I am sick of the pretentions of mankind!"

The next morning he drove to the Menagerie Mascheretti, on the Boulevard Saint Martin.

The Menagerie occupied a former carriage factory. The public entrance was from the Boulevard, but a private entrance through a long, dark passage led also to the interior. This passage had an iron door at each end; the kind the French call *grilles*.

One of these opened on a tiny courtyard, leading to a back street; the other opened into the great hall, where were the cages of the wild beasts, and also a little chamber, occupied by Signor Mascheretti, who, being exceedingly attached to his animals, was unwilling to trust them by night to the care, or carelessness, of his subordinates.

By day he was usually to be found at a café on the Boulevard, opposite to the Menagerie, and there Raynor was directed to seek him.

After introducing himself briefly to the "artist," he said, abruptly:

"I want to buy your Menagerie."

"My Menagerie is not for sale," was the answer.

"Oh! but," replied Raynor, "money can buy anything. I have come here to purchase your Menagerie."

And, in the end, though Mascheretti was most unwilling to part with his animals, Raynor became the purchaser.

It was stipulated that Mascheretti was to give one more performance, during which he would take leave of the public.

On the day after that he was to pay off all his helpers and performers, and take a tender farewell of his animals.

"I will leave you my second in command," he said. "He understands all about the beasts as well as I do."

"I don't want him," replied Raynor. "Pack him off with the rest. I have people enough to do all I shall require."

Then Mascheretti took the new purchaser to see his beasts.

When they reached the iron gate of the private passage, he took several keys from his pocket.

"To-morrow I will give you these keys," he said. "Now let me show you my animals—yours, I mean," and he gave a deep sigh.

As they entered the passage, Raynor perceived an immense dog-kennel just inside the iron gate that opened into the Menagerie. It contained an enormous mastiff, who, though fastened by a chain, sprang furiously forward with bristling back and flashing eyes.

His master quieted him by a glance, but not before he had excited the admiration of Raynor, who instantly asked if he had purchased him, too.

"Yes," answered the Signor, "but on condition that you will pay five hundred francs to my employees, to make up to them for losing their places without warning."

"All right," said the Englishman. "Good dog!" he added, addressing the mastiff. "What a noble animal!"

They entered the hall, at one end of which were the cages of the wild beasts. At Mascheretti's appearance

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there arose a chorus of roars, howls, jabberings, and other noises.

"Here is my famous Bengal tiger," said the showman. "He came near ruining my shoulder for life, but he made my fortune. We were performing to miserably small audiences in London, but the day after the accident our Menagerie became the rage. Here is Queen Mab, my pet panther. I would not like to let everyone know it, but she has eaten her man. The jaguars have done worse. They attacked and seriously injured one of my elephants. Toby, there, is a splendid lion. He tore three Arabs in pieces when he was very young. That white bear, Nimrod, is a splendid fellow. He was captured with great difficulty in the Polar Seas after he had disposed of a canoe and some Esquimaux. His mate is less distinguished. She eats only her cubs. And there, too, you see all the rest, hyenas, tiger-cats, birds, leopards, monkeys.

"It makes me sad to think that I have sold them. Yes! my poor fellows!" he went on, with a Southern effusion that rather astonished Raynor, "your master has sold you! He has exchanged you for a handful of English gold! But one thing I promise you. I will never fill your places. I will own no other wild beasts. I will set up no other Menagerie. My career as an artist is ended. To-night will be my last performance.

"After that we will share no more triumphs; never again shall we enjoy the pleasure of terrifying an audience. To-morrow you will be nothing but caged beasts and I shall be a man out of employment, like any ordinary mortal."

"Yes! To-morrow," thought Raynor, "about midnight, I will have you snorting in some restaurant or café, with liquor in your head, and bank notes in your pocket, while I creep softly into this great hall and let out all your former pets upon the crowded Boulevard."

As he spoke, there passed through his disordered brain a vision of what would happen when he did so. He saw the first uncertain steps of the freed animals; then their wild bounds, their rising fury, their excitement, their ferocity. He saw the terror of the crowd upon the Boulevard; their panic; their fright; the selfish, *sauve qui peut* of the many, the heroic self-sacrifice of the few.

He saw Paris become suddenly a wild beasts' hunting-ground. He heard shrieks, volleys of musketry, the ringing of alarm bells, the roar of the infuriated beasts, the general consternation. He thrilled with pleasure at the thought that all this would be his doing.

The next morning he paid Mascheretti, who was half tipsy by mid-day. Two hours later he was more tipsy, though he did not seem so. He was accustomed to command himself. His business required self-possession But the liquor he had imbibed made him break forth in a maudlin lament for his lost Menagerie.

"How sad it will be," he said, "to have nothing to do but to amuse myself!"

And he walked down at four o'clock to the quarters of Javanese Menagerie to see if the Englishman was having his pets properly fed.

He found that every animal had had as much as it could eat; all were stuffed to repletion, all had a bewildered, sleepy look, except the mastiff. He had declined to eat what had been set before him. He was grieving for his master.

"They will sleep soundly till midnight," thought Raynor. "They will not wake until I shall have warily and noiselessly opened their cage-doors, and shall have taken my place on a balcony I have hired in a house opposite. I shall see them when they wake and walk forth at liberty. Oh, what fun!"

He had mixed a strong anodyne in the food that he had given them, and felt sure that they would sleep for several hours.

"And now," he thought, "I must make sure of the Signor."

He therefore invited him to dine with him, meaning to leave him dead drunk under the table.

Sure enough, late in the evening, after a luxurious dinner at a fashionable restaurant, where claret and champagne had flowed freely, Signor Mascheretti sat in his chair fast asleep. The Englishman called a waiter, and, giving him a handsome fee, desired him not on any account to wake the gentleman. After that he went away. The moment for his enterprise had come. His heart beat with impatience and satisfaction.

It was eleven o'clock. The Boulevards were brilliant with gaslight. From the Madeleine to the Porte Saint Martin all was splendour and gaiety. Horses champed at the bits and shook their harness. Carriages rolled over the stones. People came pouring out of the theatres and dancing-halls. It was a lovely night. All Paris was abroad, and what part of it was so brilliant and so crowded as the Boulevards?

The Englishman crept furtively through the crowds. No one noticed him. At last he reached the back entrance to the Menagerie, where only one gaslight shone in the darkness. The back entrance opened on a little courtyard.

He went on into this place and stood before the iron *grille*. He put the key in the lock. He turned it carefully. The door opened. He passed through, and closed it after him, putting the key in his pocket. This was a precaution lest he should be surprised by Mascheretti.

He went on towards the inner door. He saw the fierce eyes of the mastiff gleaming at him through the bars, and heard the rattle of his chain.

He unlocked the second door, and entered the Menagerie. The animals seemed to be waking up.

When they heard him approach, they began to make various noises. He had a candle in his pocket. He lighted it and looked into their cages.

None of them were fully roused, but all seemed to be on the point of waking. There was no time to be lost.

Very softly he opened the door of the tiger's cage, then that of the lions, one after the other, until at last all were emancipated.

"All right, so far. Now in half-an-hour I shall see all Paris in an uproar. What fun! What fun!"

Having opened all the cages, he left the iron door open that led from the Menagerie to the long passage, and proceeded down that passage to the outside entrance, the door which he had locked so carefully.

"The jaguars will come out first," he thought. "They seem more fully awake than the others; then the two white bears; then the lions; all will be ready for a midnight banquet. By that time the alarm will have been given. There will be racing and chasing in all directions. Men will shout and women will scream. I defy any man on earth to go in that hall and shut the cages after the beasts begin to swarm down this passage."

And he kept on saying at intervals to himself:

"Oh, what fun!"

"When I set the outer gate open," he reflected, "I will fasten it back so that there will be no chance of its shutting to. There is too much gaslight," he added.

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"It may dazzle their eyes as they come out, and it may drive them back again."

So saying, he tried to turn off the gas with his cane; but the cane was too slender. He remembered to have seen an iron rod standing behind the door. With this he put out the gas.

"And now," said he, "for the outside door. When that is open, my part will be played, and then will begin the fun!"

At that moment he was nearly knocked down by a swift blow upon his back. The mastiff was upon him. He had broken his chain! The Englishman had only time to spring aside, and to strike frantically about him with his bar of iron. He darted forward to open the iron gate, now within three feet of him. The jaws of the mastiff had not wounded him. In the darkness, the dog had only secured a mouthful of his clothing.

But, horror! Part of that mouthful was his pocket. In that pocket was the key of the outside gate and his pocket-pistol!

With the rapidity of lightning he saw the hopelessness of his situation. On one side was the gate, which he could not open; on the other, was the mastiff, a wild beast in himself, and his only weapon in the dark was his bar of iron! It seemed to keep the dog in check, but what would it do against all the wild beasts in the Menagerie?

Raynor was strong and active; but do what he would, he could not burst the bars of the iron door, nor break the lock. He dared not try to climb over the high gate. Such an attempt would force him to lay down his iron bar, and to expose himself in the rear to the attack of his enemy. He dared not cry aloud for help. A cry might bring upon him all the wild animals.

A cold sweat broke out all over him.

"And this dreadful dog is mine," he thought. "I paid five hundred francs for him. I am his master. I don't even know his name. Hi! Hector, Lion, Cæsar, Bull, Fox, Sport, Tray, Dash!—what is the use? He has some French or some Italian name that, of course, I never heard of. To think of his having broken his chain. So much for French hardware. And there's the Signor asleep with his head on the table in the restaurant, while I——"

Here he was interrupted by low growls from the Menagerie. Momentarily they increased in violence. The dog seemed to turn his attention that way.

The Englishman profited by this to make a last supreme effort. He flung himself against the iron door with all his might, he tried to force the lock with his iron bar—when suddenly the door was thrown wide open. He fell through it on his face, and fainted away.

It was Signor Mascheretti who opened the door.

He had retained a pass-key, and had come down to the Menagerie at midnight to look upon his beloved animals once more.

"I should like to know," said he to Raynor, when he stood by him in the little courtyard, as he came to his senses, "what all this is about? I find my dog with a broken chain and all the cages open. While you came to yourself I have been in and fastened them. My good sir, the police will be apt to look into this matter. You little understand how to care for your Menagerie."

"Mine?" cried the Englishman. "It is yours. I give it all back to you. Keep it—the dog and all! But never say a word of this, for your life!—never a word!"

Signor Mascheretti kept the secret; and how I came to hear about it you will never know E. W. L.

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NIPPED IN THE BUD.

A RAILWAY ROMANCE.

I WONDER how it happens that I was always so ready to fall in love? For one thing my parents made a runaway match of it, after only once meeting, and that at a ball. Then again my father died soon after my appearance, and my mother consoled herself with the circulating library.

My earlier efforts at falling in love hardly met with the success I had been led to expect from the story-books; in fact I was hardly ever able to speak to the charmer. None of those happy occasions for rescuing her from unforeseen peril, or even for picking up her handkerchief happened, leading me to doubt that special Providence, so largely drawn on by my chosen romancers. But I hoped against hope.

My twenty-first birthday put me in possession of a comfortable independence, of which I took advantage, by leaving home and living in lodgings.

One fine Saturday morning I was strolling up and down Paddington Station having resolved to spend the week-end snaring the wily roach from a punt, on which boat, in my opinion, builders have never improved. In what other craft, I ask, can you have a comfortable chair?

I had a few minutes to wait, and was wandering aimlessly about, when I turned and came face to face with the most beautiful creature I ever saw, that is, till I met the present Mrs. Smith. She was tall and fair, quite divinely so, as some one remarks.

With her was an old gentleman, her father obviously. One quiet glance of her eyes finished me completely; if grovelling on the ground could have won her, I would have grovelled; perhaps I could display my valour and knock somebody down—a porter, say, or the old gentleman. On second thoughts, it seemed injudicious to do either. The old gentleman was her father, and the porter—well, he was as big as I was.

Something, however, must be done. At last they took their seats in the train I was going by. Happy thought, I would see where they got out, and track them home.

"John," I said to myself, "you are a man of sound common sense, the idea is worthy of you."

As I was mentally congratulating myself, their compartment filled up, and I had to content myself with the next. However, I secured a corner on the up-side, and so insured my seeing them as they left the train.

As we steamed out of the station I leant back and gave myself up to meditation. The first-class carriages on the G.W.R. are very comfortable, the sunshine was delightful, and my cigar was super-excellent.

Brighter and brighter grew the castles in the air, the wedding-day was fast approaching, when I was rudely awakened. "Tickets please." There was a porter standing over me, and fumbling hastily for my ticket, I asked him where we had got to.

"Reading," was the answer, so I paid the excess on my ticket and dashed out of the carriage.

My worst fears were realised; they had left the train, but where? The guard could give me no information. There was nothing for it but to curse my stars and get back as fast as I could.

This, I found, could not be for an hour, so I wandered into Reading, fuming. The place had no attractions for me, even the thought of biscuits was without charm. On my way back to the station I was startled by a huge slap on the back. It was the last straw, my temper could hold out no longer. I turned round, prepared to curse bitterly, and found my assailant to be none other than my dear old friend Brown.

Brown and I, while at school, had been the closest of chums, and when he went on to Oxford, we had always continued our friendship by meeting in the vacs.

Latterly, our correspondence had flagged; excepting his ordination, I knew nothing of him since he left Oxford, now four years ago. It turned out he was going by the same train as myself.

So as soon as we were off, we at once entered into details of what had happened since our last meeting. He, it appeared, was just married, and had a good living near Slough, which had come to him through the influence of his father-in-law.

"You used to beat me hollow," he said, "at falling in love, hence I am much surprised that I am the first to turn married man. What is your latest adventure in the falling-in-love line?"

In the fulness of my heart I there and then told him all that weary afternoon's exploits, with many raptures about her divine beauty.

He laughed consumedly, far more I thought than the humour of the story merited. Finally he apologised, and, still gasping, explained that he knew the young lady perfectly well from my description—in fact, would be glad to introduce me any time.

The train then stopped at Slough, where Brown was to get out, but before he did so, I had overwhelmed him with thanks, and accepted an invitation to come and dine on Tuesday, there to meet my charmer.

I fear I did some mad things in that empty compartment, and what old Joe, my fisherman, thought of me the next day, I can only dimly conjecture. Coming down from one of my loftiest air castles, I happened to remark that I didn't seem to be catching much.

"No," he replied, "we arn't a-catching much. You sez you's a-fishing for roach, but if any gentleman was to arsk me, why, I should say as how you was fishing for perch. Lor bless me, there he goes again."

Though aware of this (from Joe) withering sarcasm, I am afraid I did not improve much, my day-dreams were far too sweet.

Fishing is the best method of doing nothing, and enjoying it, I am acquainted with; that is, real fishing, from a punt or from the bank in a quiet place; none of your break-neck scrambling after salmon or trout. But let me hasten to the end.

In this way I managed to pass the Sunday and Monday. On Tuesday I hastened to town, selected my most approved suit, and made a most careful toilet. At six that evening I was ringing the bell of the parsonage near Slough.

I was shown into a room, the servant telling me that Mr. Brown would be down in a moment. As I entered, she muttered something, lost to me, for there was the beauty standing by the fire. As I advanced, I heard Brown's step behind me.

"Here you are, old man," he exclaimed; "let me introduce you—Mr. Smith—my wife."

A. D. H.

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THE LEGEND OF THE FORGET-ME-NOT.

ONCE upon a time, as the story-tellers say, there stood on the borders of Northumberland a great castle. Its grim towers, built as they were upon a rocky eminence, commanded the country side for miles around. About the base of the fortalice the deep waters of an unusually wide moat lapped and rippled under the strong breeze, which swept down upon it from the Cheviots.

Sakers and culverins pointed threateningly from its grey battlements. From its topmost turrets and weather-stained walls, armed sentinels kept watch and ward—arquebus, or long bow in hand—for at the period of which we write, the latter weapon was still in use—turning their fierce eyes towards the Scottish borders, the debatable land, which lay almost at their feet.

Bitter experience of burnt hamlets—harried fields—the fruits of northern forays—should have taught them vigilance; but the most watchful sentinel is liable to sleep at his post, the most experienced warrior to be caught some day, off his guard.

At the moment that our story opens, the garrison of the fortalice we are describing, was suffering for such indiscretion.

In the darkness of the preceding night, a band of their most hated enemies—the wild tribesmen of Douglasdale—had stolen down upon them, out of the border mists, and when the morning broke, the only traces of their visit had been a column of smoke rising from their herdsmen's cottages, and a view of empty pasture lands, which, the previous evening, had been dotted with a herd of their fattest beeves.

As a result of this predatory visit, the courtyard of the castle—one of the dependencies of the Northumbrian Piercys—resounded with the clash of armour, the stamp, stamp of iron hoofs, the jingle of spurred heels, and the hoarse voices of command.

An expedition, hastily assembled, was on the point of setting forth in pursuit of the marauders. Armed to the teeth with sword and spear, arquebus and long bow—the soldiers in jackets of stout bulls' hide and leathern caps, protected with bands of iron—the young knight, the second in command, in complete armour of glittering steel—they issued, one by one, from the armoury, and each taking his place at his horse's head, silently waited the command to mount.

But the minutes passed and the order came not. The young officer ever and anon glanced at the dial, noting with evident impatience the shadow, which marked the hour, gradually stealing towards noon.

"Where is Sir Guy? Has any among ye seen aught of our leader?" he exclaimed at last.

The soldiers addressed looked at each other knowingly while many a smile—though speedily repressed—played around their bearded lips.

One at length spoke:

"Methinks I saw the knight making for the Castle garden awhile since," he said.

"Ha!" ejaculated the young man significantly to his squire. "Then the reason is not far to seek. When the war-trumpet sounds the call to arms, naught would make a Piercy dally, but a woman's smile. Yet methinks this one is worth the winning though," he added thoughtfully, "and we must een cool our heels in waiting and give the Douglas men another half hour's grace. It will be that ere we shall put foot to stirrup, I ween!"

And who was this maiden whose smile could keep a scion of the Piercy's at her side when he should, in duty bound, have been spurring at top speed in the direction of Annandale?

Let us—using the privilege of the story-teller, and dividing time and space with a stroke of the pen—follow without.

Issuing through the raised portcullis, drawn up ready for the expected passage of the waiting troops, and passing through the narrow space intervening between the drawbridge, as yet unlowered, and the rough hewn walls, we continue along the base of the castle, on a level with the moat, till we reach a fairly broad space, covered with banks of yellow marigolds, sweet-smelling gilly-flowers, and a very tangle of blooming rose-bushes, and clinging honey-suckle—the castle garden,

Let us peer among the mass of eglantine, through the tall stems of multi-coloured hollyhocks, which hid an angle in the walls from a curious view of the warders who guarded the drawbridge.

There we shall find them both—Annabel and Guy de Piercy—of the same name yet not of the same parentage. She is seated on a huge moss-grown stone, probably from its shape and splintered appearance dislodged from the walls above—hurled perhaps from the battlements upon the head of some unfortunate wight below.

The white fingers of one hand are toying idly with the gold fringe of her girdle. The other lies in her lap, scarcely whiter and more delicate than the spotless robe, whose simplicity seems to emphasise the graceful contour of the form it is intended to hide.

He is stretched upon the greensward at her side, his ardent gaze turned admiringly on her face, which she keeps half averted, whether from a coyness, or a desire to tease, he is plainly doubtful.

It is a pretty picture that we gaze upon, from the security of our floral screen. In the foreground are the waters of the moat, glistening in the sunshine, the narrow

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stretch of grass-grown terrace, the patches of lurid-coloured flowers, the fairy-like form of the girl, with her tresses of nut-brown, flowing unconfined upon her shoulders, the martial figure of the young knight, encased in glittering steel, his plumed helmet lying at his side. While in the background, dark and forbidding, are the rugged, time-stained walls of the old keep.

But having gazed our fill, let us listen—using still the privilege we have usurped—to what is taking place.

The knight is speaking, his spurred heels digging nervously into the soft turf upon which they rest, bearing evidence that he is not so much at ease, as his attitude would convey.

"Sweet coz, it is high time for me to go," he is saying for the twentieth time during the quarter of an hour they have lingered there, making no attempt to rise nevertheless. "Thy father, my good uncle—Sir John—brooks no delay, and ere sundown we must be well o'er the Northern border."

"Then I say again why dally, cousin Guy?" she replied with a taunting laugh. "Thy troops stand ready armed and impatient, in the courtyard within, and only require the presence of their halting leader to set forth."

The spurred heels make a more vicious lunge at the unoffending turf which flies right and left in miniature showers, and glancing down, she proceeds:

"Methinks, Sir Knight, those spurs of thine will have to be put to better use full soon, than in digging pits in my poor garden."

"A truce to thy gibes, Annabel!" he cries impatiently, "If I tarry here thou knowest the reason full well. 'T is to have thy answer."

She heaves a sigh of mocking deprecation.

"Then I fear thou wilt tarry long, sweet sir, and my father's beeves be salted down and in the pickle tub, ere those long limbs of thine grip thy courser's sides," and eluding the hand with which he endeavours to detain her, she leaps quickly to her feet and poises herself lightly as a bird on the parapet which guarded the moat.

He is not slow to follow, and the beauty of the girl he gazes upon, conquering his vexation, he goes on:

"Annabel! Annabel! Remember that I love thee. Aye, all the better for thy teasing ways, thou sweet witch!"

"So does many another gallant, if soft looks, heavy sighs, love verses, and many a golden guinea spent in Jongleur's songs, under the Castle walls, are tokens," she says coolly.

His teeth sink savagely into his lower lip, while his clenched hand steals round till it rests upon the hilt of his dagger.

"Too true, I know it well! But let them ogle and send love verses, spend their guineas in love charms, play the troubadour under thy casement, what they will. I care not! But"—menacingly—"the gay springald who wins thee had better have bearded the Black Douglas at his own gate, than have robbed Guy de Piercy of the woman he seeks to make his bride."

His answer—in keeping with the fierce spirit of the times—evidently pleases the border maid, for notwithstanding the glint of mischief which still lingers in her hazel eyes, she says softly, laying her hand upon his mailed arm:

"Thou wouldst do doughty deeds for my sake, Guy, wouldst thou not?"

He starts like a mettled war-horse under the spur.

"Methinks it is o'er late in the day to ask that,"—reproachfully—"Has there been a tilting match these five years past, at which I have not proclaimed thy beauty 'gainst all comers? Aye, and maintained it at my spear point too. Give me thy scarf!" he goes on, making an impetuous movement to snatch from her shoulder the strip of scarlet silk, which lends the only touch of colour to her attire. "Give me thy scarf, I say, and ere to-morrow morn, it shall be tied to my lance, and carried as my pennon, to the very gates of Castle Douglas."

"And thy head perhaps would remain to grace those same gates, as the penalty of thy frowardness," she cries, laughing still, and keeping him at arm's length, "while my father would lose one of his best knights."

"What matter!" he answers gloomily. "There are others as fitting, to take Guy de Piercy's place!"

"I doubt it not, Sir Modesty!" she says, "but my father may think otherwise. Besides, he loves not such feats, and would blame me sore that I had sent thee on such an errand, more especially before thou hadst brought back his stolen cattle. But"—with a glance coaxing him once more into good humour—"there is a simpler and less dangerous way to win my favour."

"How?" he asks.

"See!" pointing to a tiny blue flower, growing on the farther side of the moat. "Fetch me hither that floweret, and, who knows? I may be tempted to grant thee the boon thou askest."

She glances down at the muddy waters, then turns her face aside, to conceal the mischievous smile which dimples it.

"Methinks the task thou hast set me is an easy one, sweet coz!" he cries joyously. "What ho, there, warder! Lower the drawbridge! Quick! Lower away!"

But the wind, sweeping down from the opposite direction, the warders hear nothing, and chat on unconcernedly, within the grille.

He is hastening towards the gateway to repeat his commands, when she stops him with a gesture.

"Nay, nay, not so fast, Sir Knight. Thy task is not so simple as the gathering of yon floweret, dry-shod. Neither would I wish it to be carried to my father's ears, that the captain of his riders is dallying in the garden, whispering love speeches to his daughter, when he should be shouting war cries at his foes. Thou must perforce wet thy jacket, bold sir, or wait my answer till some future time, when, who knows? fickle maid as thou hast often called me, I may have changed my mind."

"Then thy mind is made up at last?" he exclaims eagerly.

"Do my behest first, and ask thy guerdon after," she replies.

The knight tugs his moustache ruefully, looking from his spotlessly polished armour to the stagnant waters at their feet.

"By my halidom! That paltry blossom is scarcely worth the rusting of my war gear, to say nothing that 'tis no fitting dress for swimming. Prithee, choose some other task for thy true knight, lady mine."

The petulant maiden's face flushes.

"I meant that thou shouldst doff thy armour, ere thou leapt into the stream. But it matters not. Keep both thy mailed coat and leathern jerkin dry! 'Twas but an idle fancy. 'Tis a paltry blossom as thou sayest. Yet"—with a touch of scorn—"methinks 'twould have been more knightly of thee if thou hadst not said so, seeing that I had chosen it as a token of thy love."

Tossing her pretty head, the pampered maid takes a hasty step toward the gates, when the sound of a heavy plunge arrests her steps. The knight, stung by her

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words and regardless of the heavy weight of his mail, has leapt headlong into the black waters of the moat.

Remorseful and alarmed for his safety, she returns to the water's edge, but the sight of her lover, swimming slowly it is true, but sturdily towards the opposite bank reassures her.

An expression changing from gratification to mirth, then to something more tender, beams in her eyes. She watches him reach the other side, sees him pluck the frail blossom growing out of the soft mud at the water's edge; then after an ineffectual attempt to secure a foothold, or obtain a rest for his tired arms, turn and swim, very slowly now, towards the point where she stands awaiting him.

That the weight of his armour makes the task no easy one she also sees, but that he is distressed—nay, in imminent danger—she does not realise. To the swimmer it is different. He knows the truth, and despair is at his heart.

His blood is pumping through his veins, each stroke of his wearied limbs he thinks must be his last. Yet, brave knight as he is, he keeps a smiling face turned towards the maiden, whose own, wreathed in smiles, instead of drawing nearer, seems to the exhausted man, to be receding from him.

The effort is too great to be long sustained. He makes a bungling stroke, his mouth and nostrils sink below the surface, he gives a gurgling cry, and only by a desperate effort, keeps himself afloat.

At this moment, the sound of a trumpet call from the courtyard within peals over the waters.

The maiden turns her head in the direction of the sound, so remains ignorant yet of his peril.

"Haste thee! Haste thee! Thou sluggard!" she cries, "Hearest thou not the trumpet blast? Thy troop is growing impatient, and listen!"—as sounds of clanking chains and creaking pulleys break upon their ears—"they are lowering the drawbridge! In a moment thy riders will be pricking across. Would'st thou have them discover thee swimming like a tadpole, i' the moat?"

Neither the trumpet blast nor the maiden's banter can give strength to his wearied limbs, still doggedly he swims on—silently, too, for his bursting lungs will not permit the double effort.

If he speaks he must stop, and when he stops he knows full well, that he will sink like a stone.

Anxious that he shall not expose himself to the ridicule of his followers, and growing vexed at his seeming perverseness:

"Come! Come! Give me the floweret!" she cries, "give it me, ere thy troopers come, or count my favour lost!"

With a last expiring effort, he raises himself breast high out of the water, and hurls the fragile blossom towards her. It falls almost at her feet. As she stoops and plucks it, a whisper, soft as a sigh, falls upon her ears, from the dark waters:

"Forget-me-not! Love! Forget-me-not!"

Alarmed, she starts to her feet, and gazes down into the black flood with distended eyes, but only her own face is reflected there. Nought breaks the unruffled surface of the moat, but a rapidly widening ring of water. It is followed by a bubble which bursts and disappears—then all is still. Nothing betrays that a brave knight sleeps his last sleep below. Nothing—not even the maiden, at whose bidding he had leapt to his death.

When the troop files across the drawbridge, and forms up on the plain beyond, she makes no motion, gives no sign, standing immovable as a statue, with wide-open, meaningless eyes.

When they come to ask her, whither he has gone, and why he tarries, she starts for a moment as if unable to comprehend. Then she again and again presses a tiny blue flower to her white lips, and murmurs vacantly:

"Forget-me-not! Forget-me-not!"

Hubert Bartlett.

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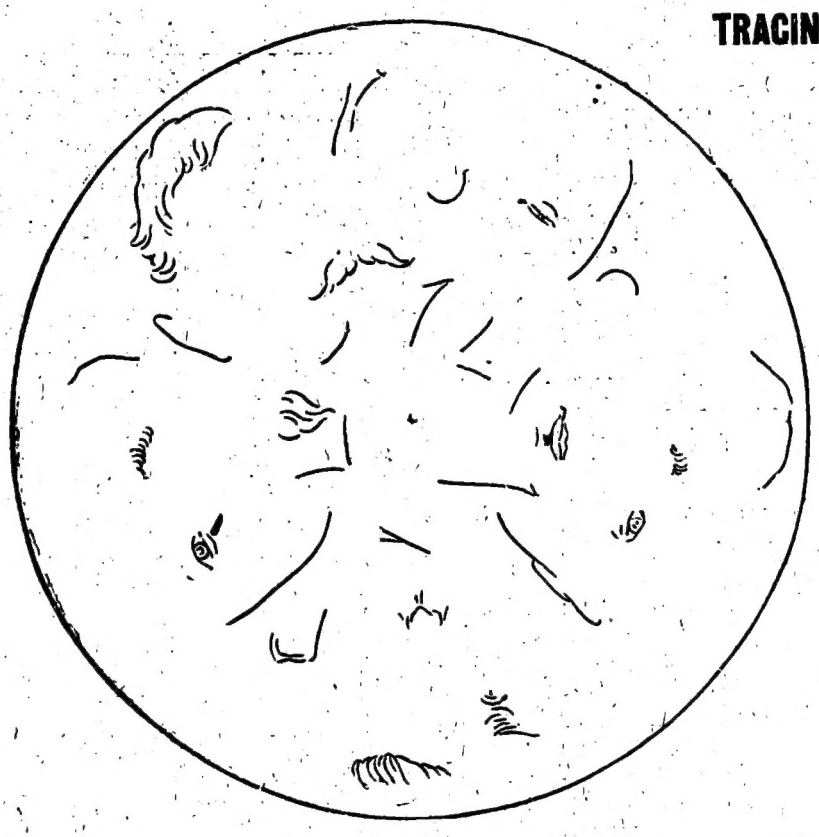
TRACING FACES COMPETITION.



Here we have a circle containing a number o lines. All you have to do is to take a strip of tracing paper about four inches long by two and a half inches wide, stick a pin through

One of the faces you can make.

one end of it, and through the centre of the circle (indicated by the cross).

Trace one of the lines. Then shift your paper round until you find another line to meet it—an ear, or a pair of eyes, or a moustache.

When you have finished, the result should make the portrait of a well-known person. Any number of faces can be made, but there is only one correct face in each circle.

First Prize, £2. 2nd to 10th Prizes, a Six-Shilling Novel.

The first prize will go to the reader from whom we receive the correct solution. In the event of a tie, the prize will be awarded to the sender of the neatest solution. The Editor's decision is final, and competitors must enter on that understanding.

All attempts to reach this office by Monday, August 13th.

NOTICE.—Paste your piece of tracing paper on half a sheet of note paper, affix your name and address, and post in an envelope marked "Gymnasium."

RESULT OF BRAIN GYMNASIUM.

Nos. 163 to 168.

THE prize of £2 has been awarded this week to Mrs. Emily West, 173 Upper Richmond Road, Putney, S.W., whose solution was the first correct one dealt with.

A copy of "The Hermits of Gray's Inn," by G. B. Burgin, has been sent to:

J. D. Champion, Liskeard.
Mrs. McCoy, Ormskirk.
C. H. Beech, Hr. Broughton.
J. B. Johnson, Birkenhead.
James Braidwood, Edinburgh.
Mrs. Grist, Bayswater, W.
W. Joy Lavers, Mutley.
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NOTE.—In Puzzle No. 17. two R's too many were given in the question.

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No. 170. *Lace, Face, Mace, Dace, Pace.*

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D i E t. PAARDEBERG.
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No. 172.

STAR
TARE
AREA
READING
IDEA
NEAT
GATE

No. 173.

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India
Tram
Cologne
Harpipe
Blandsleagle
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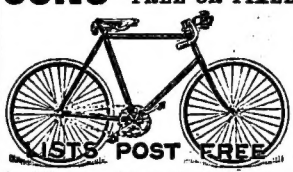

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